

FROM THE MOUTH OF THE DARK CAVE

COMMEMORATIVE SCULPTURE OF THE LATE CLASSIC MAYA

BY KAREN BASSIE-SWEET

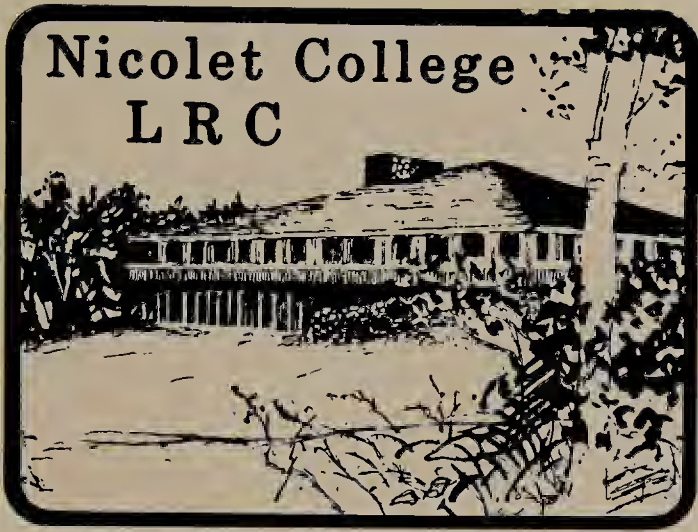
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The southern lowlands of the Maya region are honeycombed with caves formed by the erosive action of underground rivers. These caves, with their dramatic dripwater formations, winding tunnels, and huge caverns, played a major role in the ideology and world view of the Classic Maya. Considered to be the home of ancestors and of deities associated with the sun, moon, rain, wind, and corn, caves were a portal between the tangible human world and the invisible world of the gods. It was at this portal that the Maya performed their most sacred rituals. Bassie-Sweet argues that it is these cave rituals that are most often illustrated on Late Classic Maya sculpture.

Scenes found on the sculpture frequently comprise both a hieroglyphic text and an image of an action. In discussing the relationship between text and image, this groundbreaking study defines a Late Classic framing convention used to indicate which of many events described in the text is illustrated in the image. It is demonstrated that the traditional interpretation of some of these scenes as accession events is incorrect, and that they in fact represent preaccession and Period Ending rituals. Bassie-Sweet further argues that some of the motifs found in the image, such as cauac monsters, sky bands, and ser-

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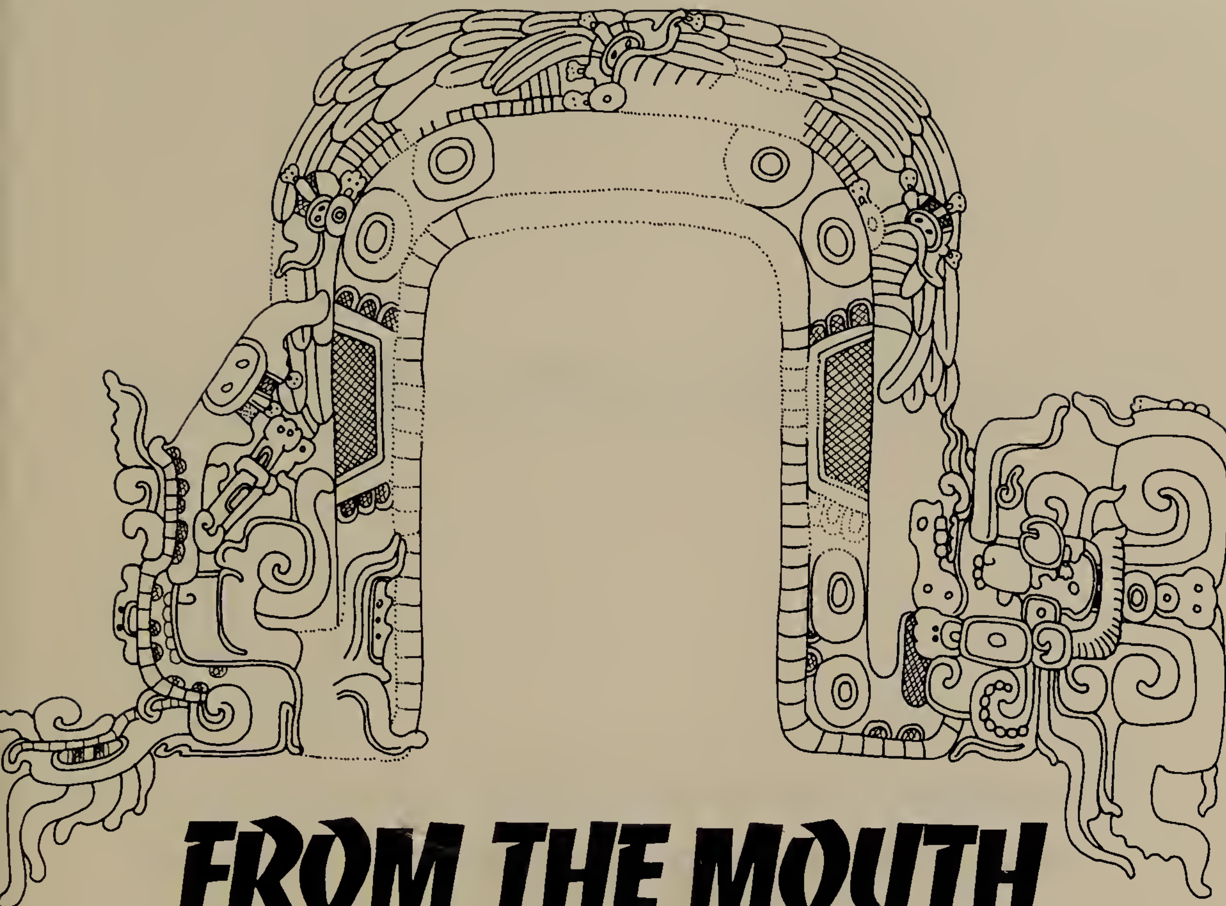

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Commemorative Sculpture of the Late Classic Maya



Relief sculpture, "Chac the rain god," Palace at Palenque.



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Commemorative Sculpture of the Late Classic Maya

by Karen Bassie-Sweet

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In memory of William E. Griffiths, the Keeper of the Bow. He was more than my brother-in-law, Bill was my friend. I miss him.

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Preface

From the Mouth of the Dark Cave had its beginnings in 1986 when I attempted to write a short commentary to accompany my drawing of the new Yaxchilan Stela 34. My intent was to demonstrate the basic supposition of modern epigraphic and iconographic studies—that the verb stated in the hieroglyphic text is the action illustrated in the image. However, the actions illustrated on Stela 34 did not correspond to the established translations of the Stela 34 verbs. In researching this anomaly, I had to reexamine and eventually challenge some of the most widely accepted interpretations regarding the scenes found on Late Classic Maya sculpture. *From the Mouth of the Dark Cave* presents those questions and challenges, and offers new interpretations of Late Classic Maya life.

Although this study is an exploration of the relationship between the text and the image, its focus is on the illustrative or pictographic qualities of the text and how these pictographs relate to the symbols found in the image. It is in essence a study of iconography, not epigraphy.

A great many people have contributed to my education in Maya studies, and to the conception and the delivery of this book. I take this opportunity to acknowledge them.

In 1976, David Kelley convinced me that I could not understand Maya art if I could not read the hieroglyphic text. He took me under his wing and began my education in epigraphy. Despite the fact that I was only an interested amateur, he allowed me to participate in his hieroglyph seminar and to use his invaluable library. Most important, he taught me that scholarship is cumulative. I deeply thank Dave for his years of advice and friendship.

It is never easy traveling in Latin America, and I am eternally grateful to my travel partner Mary Ciaramella. Whether in a mud bog on our way to Dos Pilas or floating in the pool at the Hacienda Uxmal, Mary has been a source of enthusiastic encouragement, warm companionship, and soothing humor. Her good judgment has always balanced my reckless sense of adventure. She has my love and gratitude.

Friendship is providing a haven of fairness in an unfair world. I have been truly fortunate to have such a constant friend as Persis Clarkson. She has supplied me with background material, solid criticism, and much needed editorial advice. I am grateful for that, but most of all I thank Persis for believing in me.

Walter Frances X. Morris, Jr., taught me to appreciate the vitality of modern Indian culture. His remarkable studies on costume symbols were an inspiration. I thank Chip for exposing me to the intricacies of Maya weaving and for sharing part of his world with me.

In 1984, Alfred Schmidt of the University of Alberta hired me to teach a course on Maya art and hieroglyphic writing. In preparing for the course, I began questioning some of my basic assumptions about the relationship between text and image. It set the stage for me to write this book. I am grateful to Alfred for his confidence in me.

In the spring of 1985, I heard a series of lectures by Kathryn Josserand and Nicholas A. Hopkins on the narrative structure of the hieroglyphic texts and its relationship to modern Chol. Kathryn and Nick changed my perception of how the text functions. Without the productive interaction I have had with them, this manuscript would still be six pages long and gathering dust in my in-basket. I give profound thanks to Kathryn and Nick for their extensive editing, gentle guidance, and unrestrained generosity.

At the 1987 American Anthropology Association meetings, I briefly suggested that the locations of some of the Classic period scenes were caves. Unbeknownst to me, John and Mary Pohl had already made similar arguments. My exchange with John reinforced my views on cave ritual and encouraged me to continue this line of research. I thank John for sharing his insightful views with me.

Many of my conclusions about cave imagery would not have been reached without new hieroglyphic decipherments and observations made by David Stuart. While we differ greatly in our inter-

pretations, our conversations put much of the material in better perspective for me. I thank David for his time and patience.

In the preparation and review of this manuscript, I have also benefited greatly from exchanges with Tony Aveni, Claude Baudez, Jim Brady, Flora Clancy, John Fought, Cecilia Klein, and Moises Morales. Their scholarship and professionalism have greatly improved the quality of my manuscript. I warmly thank them.

I have never written, much less published, academic material on the Maya. I extend my sincere thanks to John Drayton of the University of Oklahoma Press for being receptive to the work of an amateur and for believing that a work stands on its own merits.

I thank Ian Graham, Merle Greene Robertson and Linda Schele for allowing me to use their very fine drawings in this study. I also thank Mike Closs for supplying me with his MayaCalc program which I used to convert the dates in this book.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the enormous debt I owe to my family. My parents, Jack and Anne Sweet, provided me with constant love and support. Jacquie, Connie, and Cathy were always there whenever I needed them, giving editorial advice, professional insight, and their own brand of humor at critical moments. We are the sober sisters.

I owe my deepest thanks to my best friend and partner, Rick Bassie. For fifteen years, he accompanied me on my quests for "a pile of white rocks bleaching in the sun." Despite heat, rain, insects, snakes, things that go "bump" in the night, dismal hotels, no hotels, only cold water, no water, bad food, no food, broken rental cars, lost luggage, culture shock, and a complete lack of interest in anything Maya, he has helped me to carry the burden of my dreams. Without his knowledge of computers, financial assistance, and enormous patience, this book would not have happened.

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Introduction

The Maya area is centered in the Yucatan Peninsula and the modern country of Guatemala (see map). To the southwest its frontiers push towards the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and to the southeast it extends into Honduras and parts of El Salvador. Although geographically and ecologically diverse, this area forms a homogeneous cultural sphere with its beginning long before the birth of Christ. The Precolumbian history of the region is divided by modern scholars into time periods known as the Preclassic, Classic, and Postclassic. The beginning of the Classic period is defined by the appearance of a hieroglyphic writing system on public monuments in the southern lowlands. These texts use a specific kind of calendar notation called the Initial Series or Long Count. The end of the Classic period in the southern lowlands coincides with the time when these monuments ceased to be erected. Because the basic structure of the Maya calendar was still in use at the time of the Spanish conquest, early scholars were able to decipher this calendar and place various classic monuments in a chronological order that spans some six hundred years. The most widely accepted correlation between the Maya and Gregorian calendars places the southern Early Classic period from about A.D. 300 to 600, and the Late Classic from A.D. 600 to 900.[1]



Map 1
Maya Region, Sites Discussed in Text

During the Classic period, hundreds of sculptures were erected in communities across the Maya area. In addition to upright pillars of stones called *stelae,* scenes are found on just about every architectural surface, as well as on many small portable objects made of such materials as shell, bone, clay, and jade. These scenes often contain both an image (illustration of an action or actions) and a text (words in the form of hieroglyphs).

The limestone plateau of the Maya area is honeycombed with caves formed by the erosive action of underground rivers. These extensive cave systems with their dramatic dripwater formations, winding tunnels, and huge caverns played a major role in Classic Maya ideology and world view. Caves were thought to be the home of the deities associated with the sun, moon, rain, wind, and corn, as well as the home of the ancestors. As such, the cave acted as a portal between the real world of man and the invisible world of the supernatural. I believe that it was at this portal that the Classic Maya performed many of their most sacred rituals, and that these cave rituals are illustrated in many of the scenes found on Late Classic monumental sculpture.

The purpose of this book is to demonstrate that many of the scenes found on Late Classic monumental sculpture represent the public commemoration of private or semiprivate cave rituals that were performed by the Classic Maya elite.

Chapters 1 and 2 are an introduction to the nature and structure of the hieroglyphic texts, explaining how these texts relate to what is illustrated in the image. In chapter 2, I also define a Late Classic convention used to indicate which of the many events stated in the text is being illustrated in the image.

The symbols found in the image and in the text that represent caves, cave openings, and cave tunnels are reviewed in chapters 3, 4, and 5. I will establish that many of the actions illustrated on Late Classic monuments occurred at cave locations and that these caves were specifically the home of certain deities.

Chapter 6 is a discussion of how the Maya viewed the world and defined its limits, and what roles caves played in this cosmological model. I also argue that the Classic Maya performed ritual circuits to sacred caves around their communities, much as the modern Maya do. The identities of the deities who lived in caves are also reviewed. Chapter 7 analyzes a series of monuments from Palenque and Yaxchilan that appear to have the same theme: pre-accession cave rituals that are associated with a particular deity.

It is necessary to define some of the terms used in this book. *Text* will be used to refer to the hieroglyphic writing that appears in blocks on the monuments. *Image* refers to all of the components that are not text; these include actors, action, and paraphernalia. *Scene,* as

a technical term, encompasses the combined text and image. *Subject* refers to a person who is named in the text, while *actor* designates a person who is illustrated in the image. Similarly, *event* will be used to refer to the activity that is named in the text, while *action* refers to the activity illustrated in the image. A basic assumption of modern epigraphic and iconographic studies of the Maya monuments has been that the action of the image is an illustration of an event from the text. I accept this assumption.

Mayan languages are divided into six major branches: Huastecan, Yucatecan, Cholan-Tzeltalan, Greater Kanjobalan, Mamean, and Quichean (Campbell 1984:1). The Cholan-Tzeltalan branch can be broken into a Cholan group (Chol, Chontal, Cholti and Chorti) and a Tzeltalan group (Tzeltal and Tzotzil). The Yucatecan branch divides into Yucatec, Lacandon, Itza, and Mopan. Until the texts from all regions have been deciphered with some assurance, the question of the specific Mayan languages the Classic Maya spoke remains open. From the evidence to date, it appears that the words written on the Classic period monuments are early forms of Cholan or Yucatecan.

There has been a long tradition of inconsistencies in the spelling of Mayan words. Many authors follow the conventions used in Spanish colonial sources, in which some of the sounds used in Mayan, but not in European languages, are often represented inconsistently or not at all. Another more recent tradition employs some phonetic symbols for rendering these sounds. Many authors vacillate between these two traditions. In this book, I often follow the more general practice of using colonial spellings. When there is a particular need to specify pronunciation more exactly, I use an appropriate linguistic notation. For example, Mayan languages have glottal stops. In order to distinguish between a plain *k* and a glottalized *k*, the glottalized form is written *k'*. When it is necessary to write a Mayan word phonetically, the conventions used by Justeson and Campbell (1984) are applied. As an example, the Yucatec word for "thunder, lightning, rain, storms" is spelled *cauac* in the historical literature but is phonetically spelled *kawak*. The historical spelling of *pacal* "shield" would phonetically be written *pakal*.

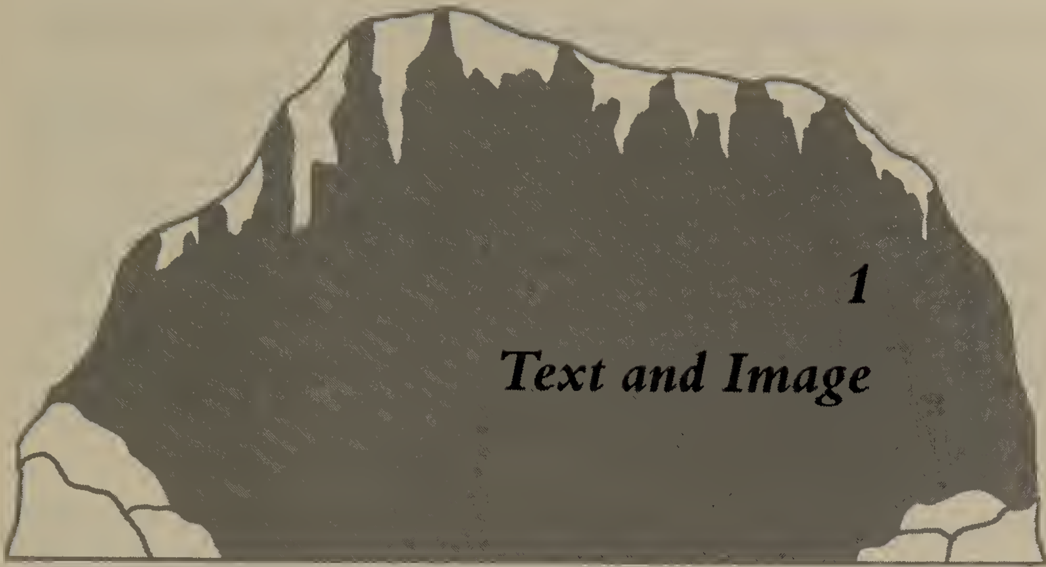
Cognate words are those that are descended from the same earlier form. The Chol word *chahk* 'thunder' is a cognate of Yucatec *cauac* 'thunder, lightning, rain'. Likewise, the Chol *chan* 'serpent' is a cognate of Yucatec *can* 'serpent'. Cholan loan words appear in Yucatec (Campbell 1984:7). For example, the name of the Yucatec rain god Chac is derived from Chol *chahk*, not Yucatec *cauac*. Such Yucatec names as Lahun Chan and Chicchan employ the Chol *chan* rather than the Yucatec *can*.

Although I have included monuments from Copan, Aguateca,

Machaquila, and Tikal, the majority of the monuments discussed in this book are from the southwest Maya zone (Palenque, Yaxchilan, Piedras Negras, and Kuna Lacanja). The reason for this imbalanced sample lies in the fact that the Maya of this zone also recorded their narratives on wall panels and lintels. By moving beyond the restrictive space of the vertical stelae, these artists were able to present more written and visual information in their scenes. Thus, this art is far more revealing than single-figure compositions found on the stelae in the other zones.

Four Postclassic hieroglyphic books—the Dresden, Paris, Madrid, and Grollier codices—have survived. These books are screenfold manuscripts written on stucco-covered bark paper. Examples from these codices are used here to illustrate certain epigraphic and iconographic points. Three colonial-period documents are cited in this book. The first is Bishop Diego de Landa's *Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatan* (Tozzer 1941). This document is a rambling commentary on Yucatec life as seen through the eyes of a sixteenth-century Spanish priest. The second document is a Yucatec manuscript that contains a series of incantations for the treatment of diseases (Roys 1965). It was given the name *Ritual of the Bacabs* by William Gates because the Bacab deities are frequently evoked in its passages. The third is the famous Quiche document, the *Popol Vuh* (Edmonson 1971; Tedlock 1985). This epic narrative tells of the creation of deities, the world, and man.

In the study of Maya art, it is often more convenient to work from drawings than from photographs of the original work, particularly when the monument is eroded. My drawings for this volume are based on photographs in my own collection or on such published works as Maler (1901–3) and Maudslay (1889–1902). Although I have not had the opportunity to check these drawings for accuracy against the original sculpture, I have attempted to be as accurate as this technique allows. If readers wish to use my drawings as a research source, I strongly caution them to refer to a photograph of the original monument as well.



1
Text and Image

We found a large number of books in these characters and, as they contained nothing in which there were not to be seen superstition and lies of the devil, we burned them all, which they regretted to an amazing degree, and which caused them much affliction.
—Bishop Diego de Landa

This chapter provides an overview of the nature and structure of the text and the image. I do not intend to give a thorough review of all aspects of text and image; rather, I focus on the material that is pertinent to my discussions regarding cave symbols and mythology. The categories of text, the numbering systems, the formation of words, and what some of these words say as well as the hieroglyphs for the calender, colors, directions, deities, place-names, historical names, and events are reviewed. Following a consideration of how the hieroglyphic words form sentences and how these sentences join to become a narrative, I briefly describe certain aspects of the image, such as visual emphasis and costume detail. The main discussion concerning the relationship between the text and the image follows in chapter 2.

The Text

Categories of the Text

In its commonest form, Maya hieroglyphic text is written in columns of square blocks. Three clearly defined categories of text are

found on monumental sculpture: main text, caption text, and labeling text. *Main text* refers to the glyph blocks that border the image and are often larger in size. *Caption text* refers to the glyph blocks that are located within the space of the image. Caption texts on monuments can be divided into two subcategories: glyphs that are in raised relief like the main text, and glyphs that are incised. *Labeling text* is found on objects and actors. As the term suggests, these labeling texts name or qualify the object or actor. For example, Proskouriakoff (1963) demonstrated that the actors being captured on Yaxchilan Lintel 8 had their name glyphs inscribed on their thighs.

Numbering Systems

A conventional system of letters and numbers uniquely identifies each glyph block on a particular monument (see Graham 1975:11). Because Maya glyphs are generally read in columns of two from top to bottom and from left to right, a letter designation is given to each column (vertical) and a number designation to each row (horizontal). However, caption texts are often broken into several segments placed strategically with respect to the image, which can make this notational system awkward. In this study, I have retained the letter/number coordinates previously established in the literature despite the fact that they do not necessarily reflect the proper reading order of the text.

A single glyph block can consist of either one "sign" or a series of signs. A sign is defined as "the smallest graphic element of pertinence in rendering either a word or sound" (G. Stuart 1988:7). A series of two or more signs is referred to as a "compound sign." In my text, the term *glyph* is used to refer to both a sign and a compound sign.

A sign or a compound sign can represent a specific Mayan word (Knorozov 1963; Kelley 1976; Fought 1965; Lounsbury 1973, 1984; Schele 1982; Justeson & Campbell 1984; Bricker 1986; Closs 1986). A glyph block can contain more than one word, as will be discussed below.

Although a sign is regarded as the basic unit of the hieroglyphic text, a sign can be divided into parts that I call *elements*. For example, the sign in figure 1a is composed of three elements: a profile enclosure shape, an upper partial circle with a descending curving line like a question mark, and a lower partial circle (fig. 1b). On the stone monuments, both circles are usually cross-hatched while in the Postclassic codices they are black. The sign in figure 1c is also composed of the same profile enclosure-shaped element but this sign has an upper cluster of drops and a lower dotted circle (fig. 1d).

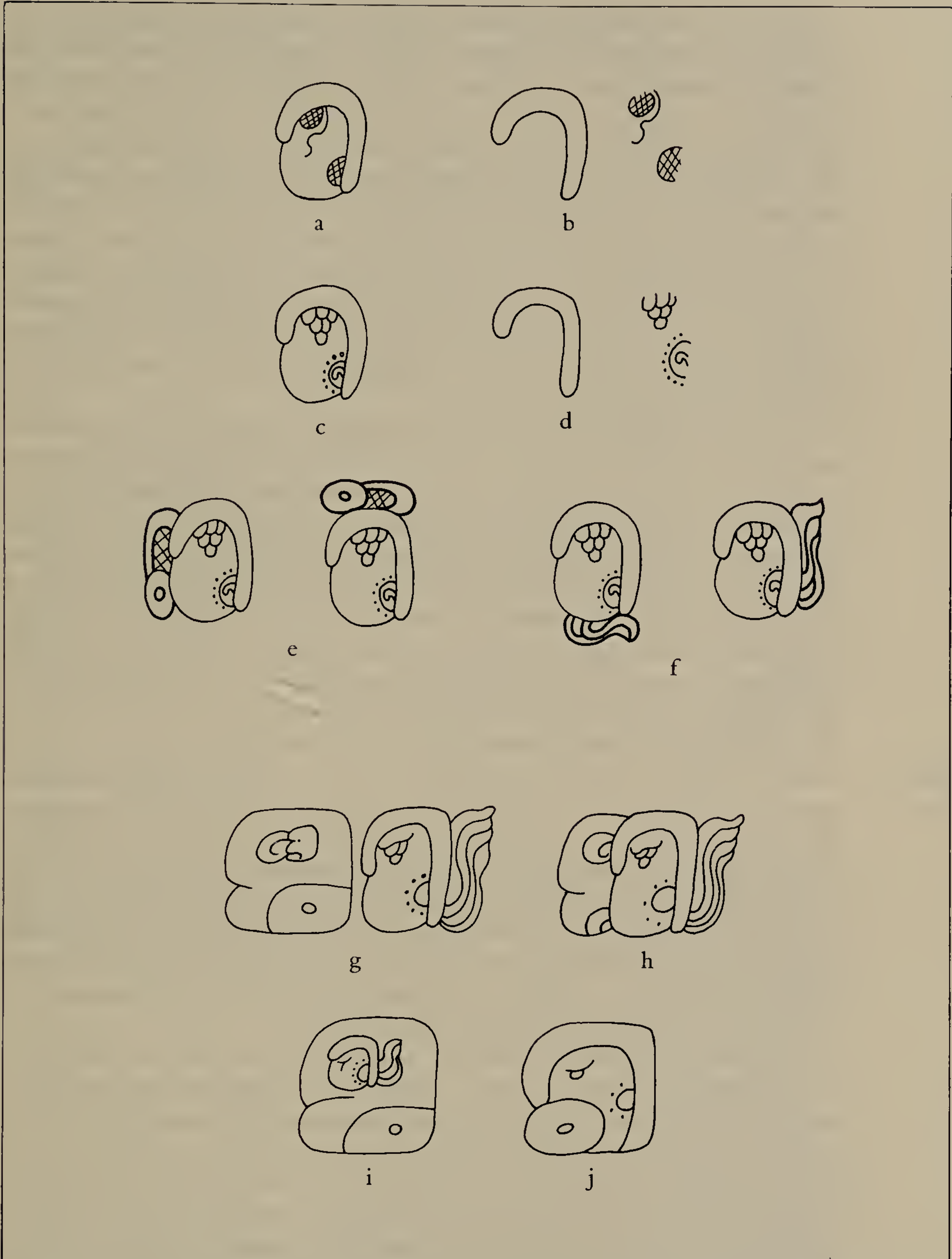


Figure 1. a. T526 Caban day sign; b. T526 Caban day sign elements; c. T528 Cauac day sign; d. T528 Cauac day sign elements; e. T95:528 Ch'en month sign; f. T528.116 tun sign; g. T644, T528:116 "seating of the tun"; h. suppression; i. infixing; j. conflation.

In the early decipherment of the hieroglyphs, English nicknames were assigned to various signs, usually based on their pictographic nature. For example, a *pictograph* (picture sign) of a bird attached to a jaguar head has been called "Bird Jaguar." Some of these nicknames are accurate translations of the sign, but others are just whimsical. I use some of these nicknames in this study simply because they are considerably easier to remember. J. Eric S. Thompson (1962) produced a catalogue of the known signs and gave a number to each. Although Thompson separated some signs that are now known to be the same, grouped some signs together that are now known to be different, and even missed some completely, reference to his catalogue remains the most widely used way of indicating what sign is being discussed.

In the Thompson catalogue, the signs of a block are transcribed into numbers (known as *T-numbers*). In a block consisting of several signs, one sign is generally larger than the others; this larger sign is referred to as the *main sign*. Main signs are assigned T-numbers from 500 to 856. For example, the main signs found in figure 1a, c are assigned the numbers T526 and T528, respectively. The sign T526 is used to express the calendrical name of a day (like Sunday, Monday, etc.), which is called in Yucatec *Caban* 'honey, beehive, bee'. The Yucatec day name *Cauac* 'lightning, thunder, storms' is expressed by the main sign T528 (fig. 1c).

Smaller signs can be attached to the main sign in front, on top, on the bottom, or at the back (fig. 1e, f). As a group, these smaller signs are called *affixes*. In figure 1e, the affix T95, which represents the color *ek* 'black', is attached to the T528 *cauac* main sign. Individually, these two signs mean *ek* and *cauac,* but in this compound sign they represent the Yucatec calendrical month name *Ch'en* 'cave' (like January, February, etc.). The compound sign illustrated in figure 1f is composed of a T528 *cauac* main sign with a T116 affix. The T116 affix has a phonetic value of *n*. This compound sign represents the word *tun* 'stone, year' (Fox & Justeson 1984).

Affixes are also specifically referred to by their descriptive terms: prefix, superfix, subfix, and postfix. In some cases, the affix attached to the main sign may have a second affix attached to it. In translating a compound sign into T-numbers, a period between two numbers indicates that the second sign is located to the right of the first. A colon indicates that the second sign is below the first. (Occasionally, a sign may appear inside another sign; this is called an *infix*.) Thompson gave affixes the T-numbers 1 to 370. Some signs can function in the position of either an affix or main sign.

Some hieroglyphic texts employ an interesting style of writing in which the signs are personified or animated. These forms can be anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, or a combination of both. They are

called head variants or full figure variants, depending on whether they consist of only a head or a full figure. The signs used to express the unit of one day (the *kin*) in the calendar system are good examples of this style.

The T544 sign, which has the shape of an X (fig. 2a), is used in calendar contexts where it has been demonstrated to represent the Maya word *kin* 'day' (Kelley 1976:33). The head variant of the *kin* sign is either an anthropomorphic head T1010 (fig. 2b) or a zoomorphic form, which sometimes has a T544 *kin* infix (see J. E. S. Thompson 1950:fig. 27). The full figure variant of *kin* is either a zoomorphic form that resembles a monkey (fig. 2c) or a full figure of the T1010 anthropomorphic head variant (see J. E. S. Thompson 1950). Although we may not understand why personifications take on certain forms, these personifications reflect the Maya tradition of seeing all things as "living."

The use of personified signs can make the decipherment of a sign difficult, for it is not always apparent, for example, whether a head is a portrait of a deity or just a personified form of a sign. For example, the anthropomorphic *kin* variant has been referred to in the scholarly literature as the "sun god" because *kin* also means sun. However, this *kin* variant does not occur as a subject in the text, which suggests that while it may be a personification of some aspect of the sun, it is not necessarily a portrait of a deity. J. E. S. Thompson gave head variants that he considered to be portraits the T-numbers 1000–1087.

Formations of Words

The Classic Maya had several methods of forming a glyphic word. Knorozov (1963) and Kelley (1976) have demonstrated that certain signs have phonetic values and represent CV syllables (*C* meaning consonant and *V* meaning vowel).[1] A combination of CV signs can be used to spell a word. For example, to spell the name *Pacal* 'shield' (the name of a ruler of Palenque), the artist could draw three CV syllable signs with the values of *pa ka la,* such as T602:25:178 (fig. 3a).[2]

The reading order of the signs can vary greatly depending on how the affixes overlap at their corners. Generally, the order is prefix, superfix, and main sign, followed by postfix and then subfix. Provided that there is only one prefix or superfix, an affix can be placed in either of these positions without changing the meaning of the glyph. For this reason prefixes and superfixes are sometimes both referred to as prefixes. Similarly, the subfix and postfix positions are also usually interchangeable, and may both be referred to as suffixes. If a sign is moved from a prefix position to a suffix position, however, the entire meaning will change.

Another method used to represent a Maya word was to draw a

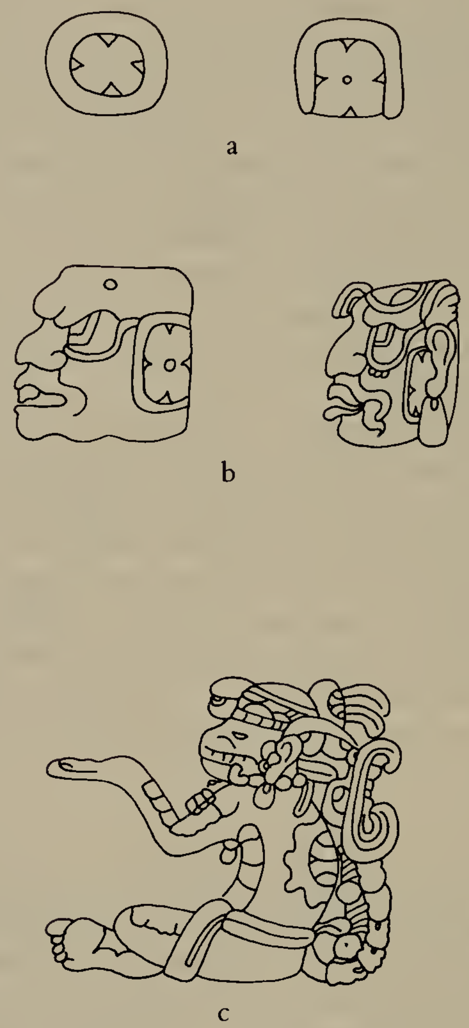


Figure 2. a. T544 "kin" sign; b. T1010 head variant of "kin" sign; c. full figure variant of "kin" sign.

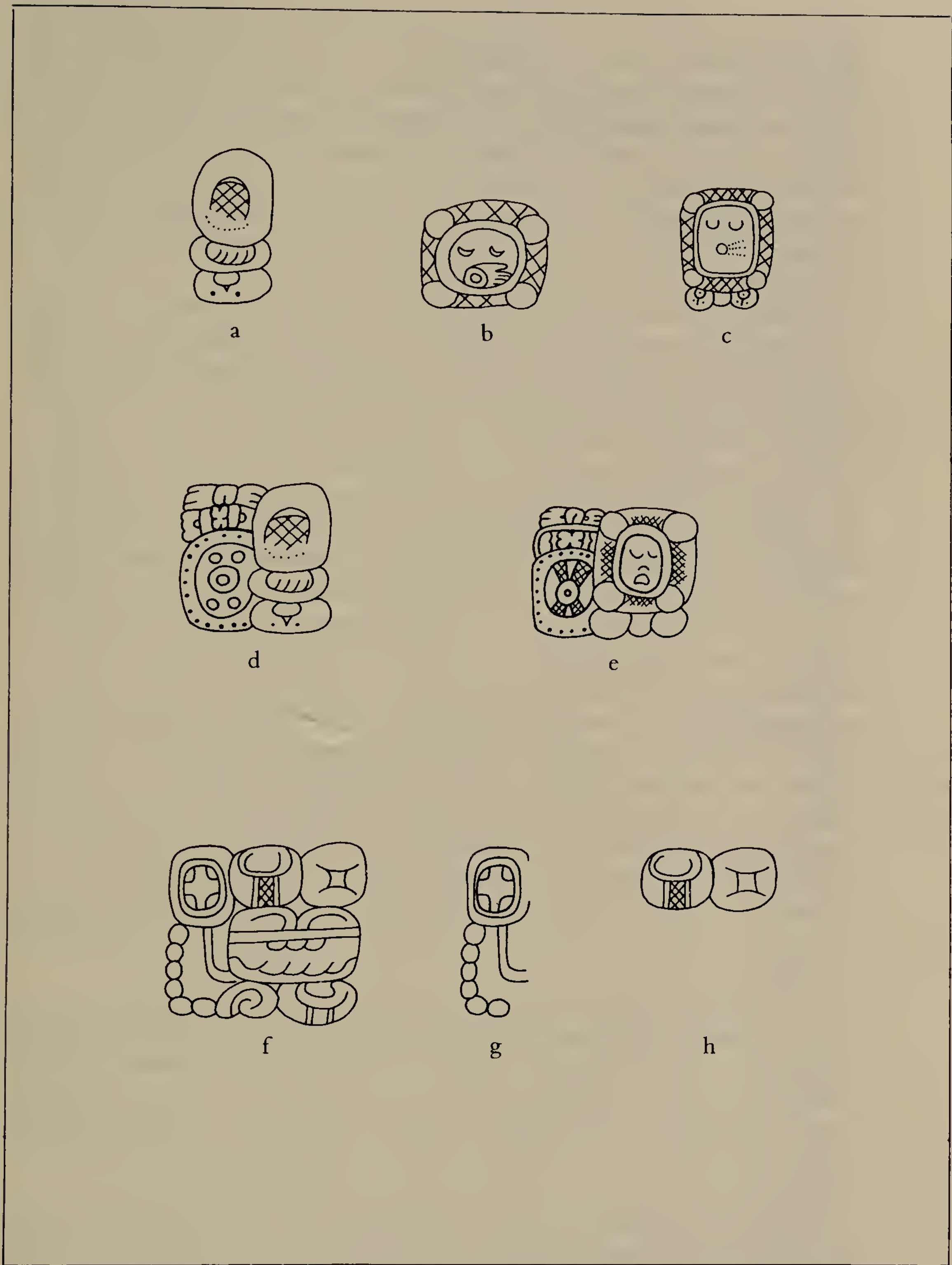


Figure 3. a. T602:25:178 *pa-ka-l(a),* Temple of the Inscriptions West Tablet; b. T537 "shield" sign, Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus Lid; c. T537:178 "shield" sign, Dumbarton Oaks Tablet; d. T74:184:624, T602:25:174 nominal phrase of Pacal II, Temple of the Inscriptions West Tablet; e. T74:184:624, T537:178, nominal phrase of Pacal II, Palace Tablet; f. Yaxchilan emblem glyph; g. prefix of emblem glyph; h. *ah po* superfix of emblem glyph.

pictograph of that word. Using this method to write the name *Pacal,* the artist would draw a pictograph of a shield (T537) (fig. 3b).[3] The syllabic rendering of the name *pa-ka-l(a)* leaves no doubt how the word was pronounced. But unless there is only one word for the kind of shield used in the pictograph, the pronunciation of the pictograph may be ambiguous. Thus the artist often added a CV sign to the pictograph to clarify the pronunciation (fig. 3c). These affixes used as pronunciation clues are called phonetic complements (Lounsbury 1973:138).

Affixes serve not only to give phonetic information, but also to supply grammatical information, such as marking verbal tense-aspect, inflection, and derivation (for a lengthy discussion of this, see Schele 1982, Bricker 1986). Not all of the functions of hieroglyphic affixes are clearly understood.

The question arises as to why the artist would use ambiguous pictographs when a syllabic rendering is more direct. The reason for this may lie in the narrative quality of the text (which is discussed at length later in this chapter). The written word can provide specific information, such as the exact date, the identity of the subject, and so forth. As in other forms of narrative literature, however, the artist is not just listing a series of events, he is attempting to conjure up a vivid image in the mind of the reader. Our own writing system depends on the use of adverbs and adjectives to supply detail and elaboration. The Maya system used pictographs to incorporate a visual adjective or adverb into the word. A phonetic rendering of a word conveys the meaning adequately, but a pictograph stimulates the imagination of the reader and adds more information to the story. Furthermore, while a phonetic rendering of a word specifies its pronunciation, that word may have several meanings. The pictograph is, in fact, a very sophisticated device for specifying one of several meanings.

Maya hieroglyphic texts are clearly written in a mixed system of pictographs and phonetic signs. There is little consensus among scholars as to which signs carry both a phonetic and a semantic value, and which represent only a phonetic value. There are cases where a sign does not carry a semantic value, but I caution that some of these examples may simply result from lack of understanding the cultural connotations.

Because the Maya scribes used both pictographic and phonetic renderings to record words, a structural analysis of parallel texts produces substitution patterns. These substitution patterns lead to the decipherment of the word or the various signs used to produce the word. Studying these substitution patterns has been the most successful method of deciphering individual glyphs.

Structure of the Text

In the hieroglyphic texts, several words can often be found within the same glyph block. Conversely, a single word can also occupy more than one glyph block. For example, figure 1g illustrates a Period Ending expression (a calendar anniversary, see below) that has been translated as "the seating of the *tun*." The first glyph block is a sign that represents the verb *seating*. This *seating* verb is also used in accession statements where it refers to the seating of the ruler on the throne. The second glyph block is the T528.116 *tun* glyph, which refers to the 360-day period called the *tun* (Fox & Justeson 1984: 48–53). In figure 1h, these two glyphs have been merged into one glyph block: the *seating* glyph has been placed slightly behind the *tun* glyph (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:41). This device is called suppression. In figure 1i, the *tun* glyph has been infixed or placed inside the *seating* verb. The glyph in figure 1j represents the merging or conflation of the *seating* verb with the *tun* glyph. In conflation, the elements of each word are combined to produce a single glyph with the same meaning as the two separate words. It is similar in structure to the English contraction of *I am* to *I'm*.

Singly or in combination, the words represented by the hieroglyphic signs form sentences. In its commonest form, a sentence is composed of a temporal marker (the date), a verb, and a subject. The order of the components in the transitive and intransitive sentences is verb-object-subject and verb-subject, respectively, just as it is in Mayan languages (Whorf 1933, Schele 1982). At times, the expected word order of the sentence is changed or some elements are omitted. For example, the date, which is usually stated first, may be placed at the end of a sentence, or the subject of the sentence may not be mentioned.

The two common patterns of Mayan compound noun formation are either adjective-noun or noun-noun (N. Hopkins, pers. comm. 1989). The term *yax-te* 'green tree' is an adjective-noun formation. It cannot be said *te-yax* any more than English would permit "tree green." The term *ton-mut* 'stone bird' is a noun-noun compound that means "the stone of the bird." (*Stone* is used as a metaphor for egg, thus, "the egg of the bird.")

Noun-noun formations are modeled on the syntax of the possessive noun phrases, which are composed of a possessive pronoun, a possessed object, and the possessor. The phrase *u-ton-mut* 'his-stone-bird' is translated into English as "the bird's stone (egg)."[4] These word orders are critical in the decipherment of hieroglyphs, as will be demonstrated in chapter 3.

Specific meanings and pronunciations of certain signs have been established. The following sections will cover the calendar, colors and directions, deities, place names, personal names, and historical events. For a thorough review of the early period of decipherment, readers are referred to J. E. S. Thompson (1950) and Kelley (1962b, 1976).

The Calendar

The early efforts at decipherment of the Classic Maya texts generally focused upon the calendrical material. The structure of the calendar was ascertained, and the various glyphs used to express calendar dates were identified. The Maya numerical system was vigesimal (based on twenty), and this is reflected in the Maya method of recording time. A date is composed of two parts: the Long Count and the Calendar Round. The Long Count gives the exact number of days from a base date (13 August, 3114 B.C.). The Maya Long Count position of 9.12.11.5.18 means that 9 periods of 400 years (*baktuns*), 12 periods of 20 years (*katuns*); 11 periods of "years" (*tuns*), 5 periods of "months" (*uinals*), and 18 days (*kins*) have passed since the calendar base date. (I use the terms *year* and *month* for the tun and uinal only as a method of comparing units. The uinal is not equal to our month, which is derived from a cycle of the moon, but rather is 20 days long. Likewise, the tun is not equal to the solar year of 365 days, but is 360 days long.)

It appears that the Classic Maya performed ceremonies at the end of every tun, but paid special attention to the fifth, tenth, thirteenth, and, most important, the twentieth tun ending (the *katun*). These special tun endings were documented on public monuments; they will be referred to in this study as Period Ending events.[5] A katun ending would have a Long Count position, such as 9.12.0.0.0. The 9.12.0.0.0 Period Ending event would celebrate the end of Katun 11 and the beginning of Katun 12.

With the exception of the information found in the Classic period texts and images that refer to these events, our knowledge concerning the tun ceremony itself is limited. Several colonial documents indicate that there was an idol for each katun period, which was said to be "seated" on a throne and worshipped during this period.

The beginning of the base date in the Gregorian calendar is not thought to be the beginning of time. The Maya did not conceive of the base date for their Long Count as the beginning of time either. However, unlike our system, which simply counts backwards from our base date, the Maya saw their base date as the completion of a

previous cycle. From several Classic period inscriptions, it can be inferred that this earlier cycle was thought to have been 13 baktuns (13 × 400 tuns) long. Thus, the Maya zero base date is written 13.0.0.0.0 instead of 0.0.0.0.0.

The second part of the Maya calendar is the Calendar Round. This cycle consists of two parts called by modern scholars the *tzolkin* and the *haab*. The tzolkin is a religious count of 260 days. It is composed of the numbers from 1 to 13 combined with 20 different day names (Imix, Ik, Akbal, Kan, Chicchan, Cimi, Manik, Lamat, Muluc, Oc, Chuen, Eb, Ben, Ix, Men, Cib, Caban, Etznab, Cauac, and Ahau). Each day both the day number and day name change. Hence, a sequential series of days would have the designation 1 Imix, 2 Ik, 3 Akbal, 4 Kan, 5 Chicchan, 6 Cimi, 7 Manik, 8 Lamat, 9 Muluc, 10 Oc, 11 Chuen, 12 Eb, 13 Ben. Following 13 Ben would be 1 Ix, 2 Men, 3 Cib, 4 Caban, etc. Because 13 (the day number) and 20 (the number of day names) do not have a common denominator, 1 Imix will not occur again for 260 days.

The haab is a solar count of 365 days that is divided into 18 "months" composed of 20 days each (Pop, Uo, Zip, Zotz, Zec, Xul, Yaxkin, Mol, Ch'en, Yax, Zac, Ceh, Mac, Kankin, Muan, Pax, Kayab, and Cumku). An additional 5 days (called Uayeb) are added at the end of a haab, resulting in a close approximation to a solar year. A sequential series of days would have the haab positions of 1 Pop, 2 Pop, 3 Pop, and so forth. An unusual feature of the haab is that the twentieth day of any given month was also called the "seating" of the next month. For example, 20 Pop could be written "the seating of Uo."

Although the Maya were aware that the solar year was longer than 365 days, they did not make adjustments as we do with a leap year. Therefore, their month positions eventually fell out of step with the seasons. When the haab began a new cycle of 365 days, the Postclassic Maya performed what is called the New Year ceremony. It is likely that a similar ceremony was performed by the Classic Maya, but no record of it has been found in the surviving inscriptions.

The names used in the modern literature for the Maya tzolkin days and haab months are the Yucatec names recorded by the first Spanish missionaries. Some of the glyphs for the Classic period day and month names have been read phonetically, and in some cases they differ from their sixteenth-century Yucatec equivalents. For the sake of convenience, the Yucatec names are retained in this study.

The Maya Calendar Round is analogous to our own system, which includes a religious count (the days of the week, Monday through Sunday) and a solar calendar (the month positions, January through December). Just as we use both the days of the week and the

month positions to describe a single day, so did the Maya use the tzolkin and haab. For example, the data 9.12.0.0.0 10 Ahau 8 Yaxkin is followed by 9.12.0.0.1 11 Imix 9 Yaxkin.

The Maya base date begins on 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ahau 8 Cumku (13 August, 3114 B.C.). Thus, all tun endings must occur with the day name Ahau because of the mathematics of the calendar.

Just as the seventh day of the fourth month of 1951 in our system can only have the position of Saturday, 7 April, a Long Count position can have only one specific Calendar Round date. Although the date of Saturday, April 7, recurred in 1956, the longer religious cycle of the Maya tzolkin (260 days versus our 7-day week) meant that the same tzolkin position would not coincide with the same haab position for 52 haab "years." This cycle is referred to as a Calendar Round.

In many inscriptions, the story begins with both a Long Count position and Calendar Round date. This Long Count is called the Initial Series and it anchors the Calendar Round date to a specific day. After this initial date, changes in the time frame are indicated by a statement of a new Calendar Round date and the number of days that have elapsed between the old and new dates. If it is longer than a uinal (20 days), it is expressed in appropriate units. For example, a time lapse of 385 days would be expressed as 1 tun (period of 360 days), 1 uinal (period of 20 days), and 5 kins (days). This statement of elapsed time is called a Distance Number.

J. E. S. Thompson (1950:162) identified two sets of temporal markers that are often found in a sentence when two dates are being joined with a Distance Number. Thompson suggested that these markers should be translated as "count forward to" and "count back to"; Schele (1982:22) translated them as "until" and "since." These two sets of markers are commonly referred to as the Anterior Date Indicator (ADI) and the Posterior Date Indicator (PDI). These markers consist of a common main sign compound plus an affix—the prefix T679 for the PDI, or the suffix T126 for the ADI. The main sign in both these markers can be one of a variety of signs, but it is always suffixed with the syllable sign *ti*, or T59, or its equivalent. D. Stuart (cited in Schele 1987a:26) has argued that they all have the phonetic value of *ut(i)* 'to happen' or 'to come to pass'.

The ADI is composed of *ut(i)* with a T126 suffix, which has been read by Josserand (in press) as *ix*, a Chol suffix that functions to mark completed actions. The PDI is composed of *ut(i)* and a T679 prefix, which functions as an emphatic conjunction meaning something like "and then," read *iwal* by Justeson and Norman (Justeson 1984:350) and simply *i* by Josserand (pers. comm. 1989) in accordance with Landa. Hence, these temporal markers can be read *ut-ix* 'it had already come to pass' and *i(wal)-uti* 'and then it came to pass'.

The affixes T126 and T679 also occur directly attached to verbs (event glyphs), and in these contexts they are referred to as the Anterior and Posterior Event Indicators (AEI, PEI). For example, the birth verb marked with T128 is "he had been born," but the same verb marked with T679 is "and then he was born." These temporal markers are further discussed below in relation to the narrative structure of the texts.

When a text mentions more than one date, usually only the Initial Long Count position is given and subsequent Long Count positions are inferred by a variety of mechanisms. New dates can be indicated by a combination of a Distance Number and a new Calendar Round date, in which case the Long Count position of the new date is clearly inferred. New dates can also be indicated by a Distance Number alone implying the new Calendar Round date and by extension its Long Count. Or a new date can be indicated by a new Calendar Round date alone (not mentioning the Distance Number). Here too the Long Count is implied. However, the deletion of a Distance Number or Calendar Round rarely creates ambiguity with regard to the Long Count position, as an example in English illustrates:

> On Sunday, 1 January 1989, Susy Parker celebrated the New Year. Three months and six days later, she celebrated the thirty-eighth birthday. On Tuesday, 4 July, Susy celebrated the anniversary.

The omitted date of Friday, 7 April for the birthday can be retrieved with a simple calculation. The deleted Distance Number of two months and twenty-seven days between 7 April and 4 July can also be retrieved with a simple calculation. Although Tuesday, 4 July is not overtly tied to the previous dates, it is apparent from context that this is Tuesday, 4 July 1989. The previous dates have set the time frame, which stays in effect unless other information contravenes. A reader of this passage would have no cause to think that this would be Tuesday, 4 July, A.D. 2000 (the next occurrence of Tuesday, 4 July) or later. Whether the story is this modern example or a Classic Maya text, the purpose of stating a date is to establish an absolute time frame for the event. If the Maya did jump forward full Calendar Round cycles, the resulting ambiguity would throw the entire narrative into confusion. Therefore, just as we would not jump a full cycle, we should not expect the Maya to jump a full Calendar Round cycle.

Distance Numbers establish the Long Count position for new Calendar Round dates. Several other devices are also used. For example, on the Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus text, the birth and death of Pacal II are stated using only Calendar Round dates with no standard Distance Number expression connecting them. His birth on 8 Ahau 13 Pop is followed by his death on 6 Etznab 11 Yax. From

the information on the Temple of the Inscriptions Tablets, the Long Count position of Pacal's birth is known to be 9.8.9.13.0 (26 March, A.D. 603), and for his death, 9.12.11.5.18 (31 August, A.D. 683), some eighty years later (Lounsbury 1974:6–8). However, the first Long Count position of the 6 Etznab 11 Yax death date following his birth is only twenty-eight years later on 9.10.18.10.18. The artist did not want to imply this Long Count position for 6 Etznab 11 Yax, but rather the Long Count position a full Calendar Round later. In order to indicate this to the reader, the artist included in the sentence a glyph that can be paraphrased in English as "four were his tun seatings." The entire clause can be paraphrased: "On 8 Ahau 13 Pop he was born. On 6 Etznab 11 Yax, four were his tun seatings, and then Pacal died." This implies that Pacal participated in four katun ending ceremonies during his life. These would be the katun endings 9.9.0.0.0, 9.10.0.0.0, 9.11.0.0.0 and 9.12.0.0.0. The artist makes it absolutely clear that the reader must go beyond the first occurrence of 6 Etznab 11 Yax to a Long Count position that occurs past the 9.12.0.0.0 Period Ending event, which is 9.12.11.5.18.

Another device for implying the Long Count position of a Calendar Round date is to tie it to a katun ending. Because of the mathematics, a katun ending date can only have the same Calendar Round date once every 18,980 tuns. Therefore, tying a Calendar Round date by a Distance Number to a Period Ending date also securely places that Calendar Round in time.

A third method of establishing a Long Count position for a Calender Round is the use of a Glyph G of the Supplementary Series. The Supplementary Series is composed of a series of glyphs that give additional information about the date (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:208, Kelley 1976:33–35). The first glyph of the Supplementary Series is designated Glyph G. This glyph is, in fact, a sequential series of nine different glyphs that change on a daily basis so that each Long Count position has a specific Glyph G associated with it.[6] Because of the mathematics a particular Calendar Round occurs with the same Glyph G only once every 468 haab "years." Therefore a date that is stated using a Calendar Round date and a Supplementary Series Glyph G can be assigned a Long Count position if a historical time frame is assumed.

In some cases, Calendar Round dates occur without any of this additional information. For example, on Yaxchilan Lintel 5, a Calendar Round of 12 Ahau 8 Yaxkin is given for an event conducted by Bird Jaguar IV. Because the same Calendar Round date occurs only once every fifty-two years, the only Long Count position for 12 Ahau 8 Yaxkin that occurred during Bird Jaguar IV's life is 9.16.1.2.0. A Classic Maya reader would know the Long Count position for this date if he assumed a historical time frame. Using the

birth and death date information for Bird Jaguar IV from other inscriptions, and assuming a historical time frame, the modern reader can also establish a secure Long Count position of 9.16.1.2.0 for the 12 Ahau 8 Yaxkin Calendar Round date.

Colors and Directions

Some of the first noncalendric signs that were deciphered were those for colors and directions. These interpretations by Leon de Rosny and Seler are discussed by Kelley (1976:53). Several early colonial books, such as *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* and *The Ritual of the Bacabs,* make references to locations and objects that are associated with a specific color and direction: red/east, white/north, black/west, and yellow/south (Roys 1933, 1965). This same association of color and direction is found in the Classic period inscriptions as well as in the Postclassic codices (J. E. S. Thompson 1934; Berlin & Kelley 1961). Because red is the color of the rising sun in the east, and black is associated with the sun setting in the west, these color-direction pairs appear to have some foundation in natural phenomena. The conceptual division of the world into quadrants based on the four directions is found in every region of the Maya area, throughout their history (Tozzer 1941). This world model is discussed in chapter 6. The Maya have a color called *yax* that has no corresponding word in English. On the color spectrum it would be a blue-green. In the Chumayel document, this color appears to be associated with the center of the world.

Deities

Paul Schellhas (1904) studied the actors found in three of the Postclassic codices. He identified these actors as deities and attempted to group similar actors under an alphabet designation: God A, God B, and so forth. Kelley later redefined some of these identifications (1976:61).

Several colonial documents make references to a vast array of deity names. Unfortunately most references give little more than the name itself. We must infer from the context the attributes and nature of the deity. In most cases, it is not even known if one deity had a variety of names and titles, or whether these correspond to several distinct deities.

Bacabs, Chacs, and Pauahtuns

Landa's discussion of the Postclassic Yucatec deities sheds very little light on the subject of deity identities and names. However, he does state that

> among the multitudes of gods which this nation worshipped they worshipped four, each of them called Bacab. They said that they were four brothers whom God placed, when he created the world, at the four points of it, holding up the sky so that it should not fall. (Tozzer 1941:135)

Landa further states that the Bacabs were also known by the names Chac and Pauahtun. Unfortunately, he does not tell us why or how these deities were related but he does say that during the New Year ceremonies many rituals were performed in their honor.

In the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel,* the gods were said to have set up four *yaxches* (the *ceiba* or silk-cotton tree) at the cardinal points (each associated with an appropriate color) and a fifth one, presumably at the center of the world (associated with *yax* 'blue-green' (Roys 1933). In the Dresden codex, four Chacs are illustrated in trees that are associated with a direction and appropriate color. A fifth Chac is also illustrated in this series that is reminiscent of the fifth location in the *Chumayel.* Thus, there appear to be five Chacs.

All three of these deities' names (Bacab, Chac, and Pauahtun) are mentioned in the hieroglyphic texts. The commonest title found in the nominal phrases of Classic rulers is a phonetic rendering of *Bacab* (Kelley 1986:220). This may mean that the ruler was identified as a Bacab or that he imitated the role of the Bacab in ceremonies. Schellhas's God N has been identified by Coe (1973:14) as Pauahtun, based on the phonetic rendering of God N's nominal glyph. The Pauahtun was a wind god, and his role is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

From other sources it is known that the third deity, Chac, was the god of thunder, lightning, and rain (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:87, 1970:251). The Maya rain god was said to produce lightning and thunder by beating his drum or by throwing his axe. He is associated with trees in general and with the *yaxche* in particular. However, the rain god is also said to be the protector of corn. In the codices, Schellhas's God B is illustrated with the same attributes, and Brasseur de Bourbourg identified him as Chac (Kelley 1976:63). In the codices, Chac's nominal glyph is a portrait sign with a stylized axe for an eye and an upright thumb conflated with the back of the head (fig. 4a). The head does not particularly resemble the illustration of Chac found in the accompanying images.

D. Stuart has identified a nominal glyph found in Classic period pottery scenes as the Classic equivalent of Chac (cited in Schele & M. Miller 1986:311–12). This portrait glyph has the same stylized axe for an eye. Like Chac of the Postclassic period, the Classic Chac portrait glyph does not resemble the illustration of the deity found in association with it. The Classic Chac of the image has the diagnostic

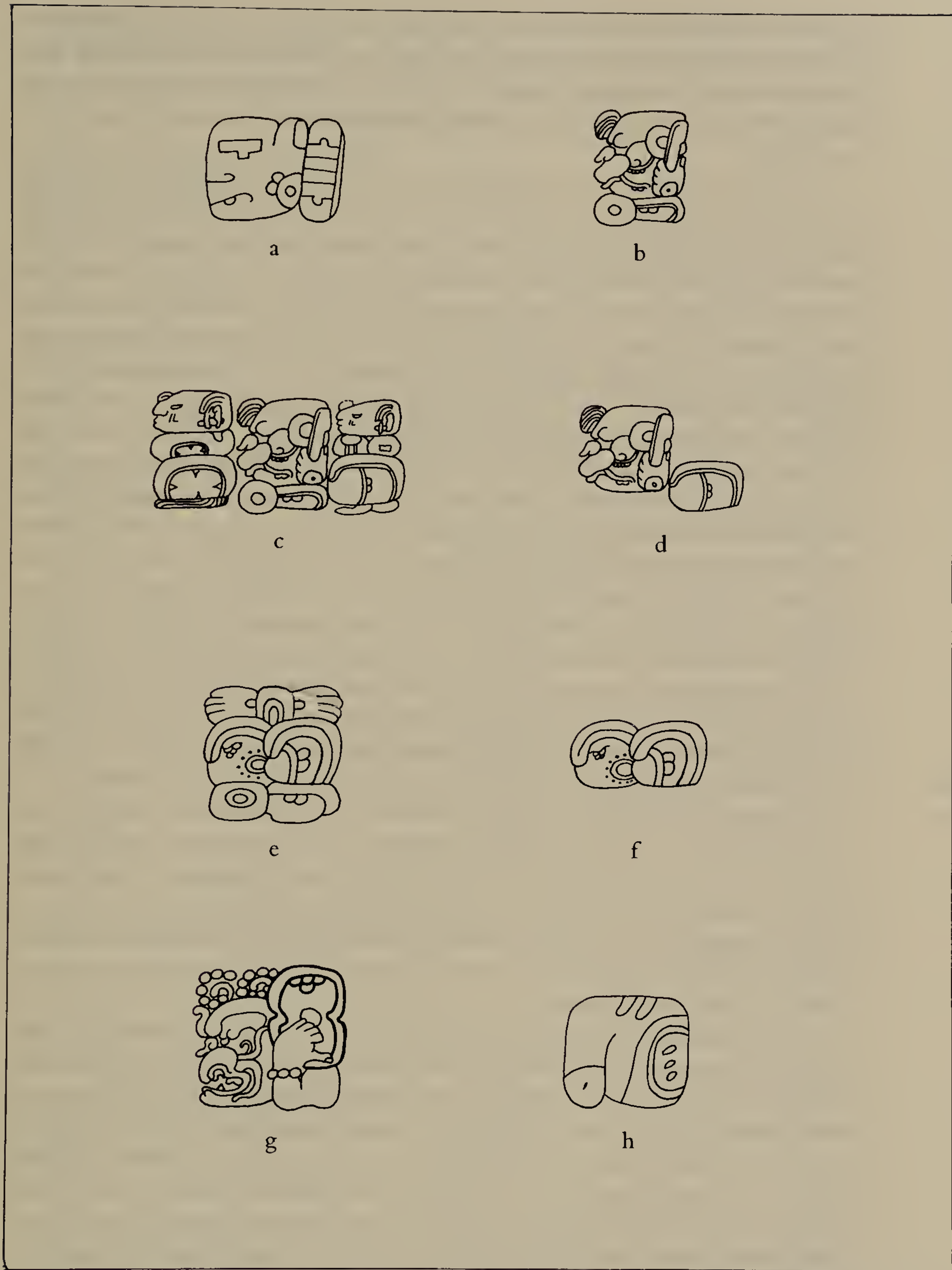


Figure 4. a. Postclassic Chac glyph, Dresden codex; b. T1030 *Chac-te* title, Yaxchilan Lintel 23; c. title of Lady Xoc, Yaxchilan Lintel 23; d. main signs of title, T1030 & T513; e. substitution title, T74:528.513:87; f. main signs of title, T528 & T513; g. T1030i "dangle god" title; h. "penis" title.

traits of a bulbous nose and a headdress with cross-band element, and he carries an axe. Often, he also has tied hair and a shell earring. In some examples, such as Lords of the Underworld Vase 4 (Coe 1978:34), he has been anthropomorphized, that is, given a human face.

On the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet, the future Palenque ruler Kan Xul II wears the costume of this Classic Chac (see discussion in chapter 7). On Yaxchilan Stela 11, the future king of Yaxchilan, Bird Jaguar IV,[3] wears not only the costume but also a cut-away mask of the deity's face. From these portrayals it can be inferred that certain Maya nobles imitated Chac. The Classic Chac illustrated in the pottery scenes also appears in the monumental texts as a portrait glyph (T1030 l–n); this T1030 deity grasps an axe (fig. 4b). In some versions of T1030, the deity also wears the cross-band headdress. T1030 is always suffixed with a T87 *te* 'tree' sign. T1030:87 functions as a title, found predominantly in the nominal phrases of rulers. This suggests that nobles not only imitated Chac, they also habitually carried a title that referred to this role.

In a comparison between the codical nominal glyph for Chac and the T1030 Chac title (fig. 4a, b), the grasping hand found in T1030 has been conflated with Chac's head in the codical glyph. The T1030 axe has been moved from the hand to the eye. The different treatment of Chac's nominal glyph and the T1030 title may reflect the fact that Chac's nominal glyph is naming the deity, while the T1030 Chac title is naming the ruler in his role of imitating the deity.

Because the Yucatec Maya word *batab* means both "chief" and "wielder of axe," Berlin read the T1030:87 title as *batab* (1958:114). Kelley (1976:231) questioned this reading, and since this is a portrait glyph, I believe the T1030 head is simply read *Chac,* as is Chac's nominal glyph in its Classic and codical forms, and that the *te* forms a second word. This title would be a compound noun formation, *Chac-te* 'Chac of the tree'.

A substitution pattern found in the nominal phrases of rulers and important women provides evidence for this interpretation. On Yaxchilan Lintel 23 (M8–N8), the nominal phrase of Lady Xoc contains two titles (fig. 4c). The basic components are a T1030 glyph and a T513 sign (fig. 4d). Both titles are prefixed with a T1000a glyph, which indicates that the subject is a woman. The T1030 title is also prefixed with the "west" sign (directions are common prefixes of this deity title) and with a T87 *te* 'tree' suffix. The T513 title is prefixed with an *ah po* 'lord' sign. D. Stuart recognized that another compound title, composed of the T528 *cauac* sign and T513 sign (fig. 4e), substitutes for the T1030-T513 compound (D. Stuart cited in Schele 1987a). This substitution title has a *ma* 'great' prefix as well as the T87 *te* 'tree' suffix. In comparing these two compound titles,

there appears to be a direct substitution between the T528 *cauac* sign and the Chac portrait (fig. 4f). The fact that *Chac* and *cauac* are linguistic cognates lends further support to the proposed equivalence of these two signs. Chac's intimate relationship with *te* 'tree' is discussed at length in chapter 3.

The Palenque Triad

The inscriptions of the Palenque Cross Group record the birth of five deities (Berlin 1963; Kelley 1965; Lounsbury 1976, 1980). These inscriptions are found on the sanctuary tablets and alfardas (the stone slabs flanking the main staircases). Berlin gave three of these deities the designations GI, GII, and GIII. The hieroglyphic text states that these three gods were all born in 2360 B.C., on 21 October, 8 November, and 25 October, respectively. Because several inscriptions refer to GI, GII, and GIII jointly, Berlin referred to them as the Palenque Triad. The triad gods are not named according to their birth order, but rather for the order in which they appear when they are named as joint subjects or objects of an event. The other two deities are a male born in 3122 B.C. and a female born 3121 B.C. The nominal glyph of the male is the same as that of GI, so Lounsbury (1980, 1985) nicknamed this earlier deity GI Senior. The female's name glyph is a woman's head prefixed to a zoomorph. Lounsbury (1976, 1985) nicknamed her "Lady with the Upturned Snout" or "Lady Beastie." The text states that "Lady Beastie" is the mother of GI and GIII. Although GI Senior is not directly stated to be the father of GI and GIII, it has been assumed that Lady Beastie and GI Senior were an ancestral couple. The third-born deity of the triad, GII, has no parentage statement.

The identities of GI and GIII will be addressed in chapter 6, but one comment is necessary here concerning GI. He is a Roman-nosed, square-eyed deity with T-shaped front teeth (fig. 5a). He has a barbel at the corner of his mouth and he wears a spondylus shell earring. Because the Chac on Lords of the Underworld Vase 4 has a Roman nose and spondylus shell earring, Coe (1978:34) equated the Vase 4 Chac with GI. D. Stuart (pers. comm. 1986) distinguishes between these two deities because the critical diagnostic trait of Chac is either the axe or the bulbous nose, and GI lacks both of these features; I agree with Stuart on this point.

The full figure glyph used in GII's nominal phrase is presumably a portrait of GII (fig. 5f). This deity has the form of a reclining baby with a *ca* sign and what I believe is an umbilical cord between his knees. Infixed in his forehead is a mirror sign (Schele & J. Miller 1983). In some of the examples of GII's nominal glyph at Palenque, the mirror has smoke emanating from it. In yet other examples, GII's entire head is replaced by the smoking mirror (fig. 5e). In other ex-

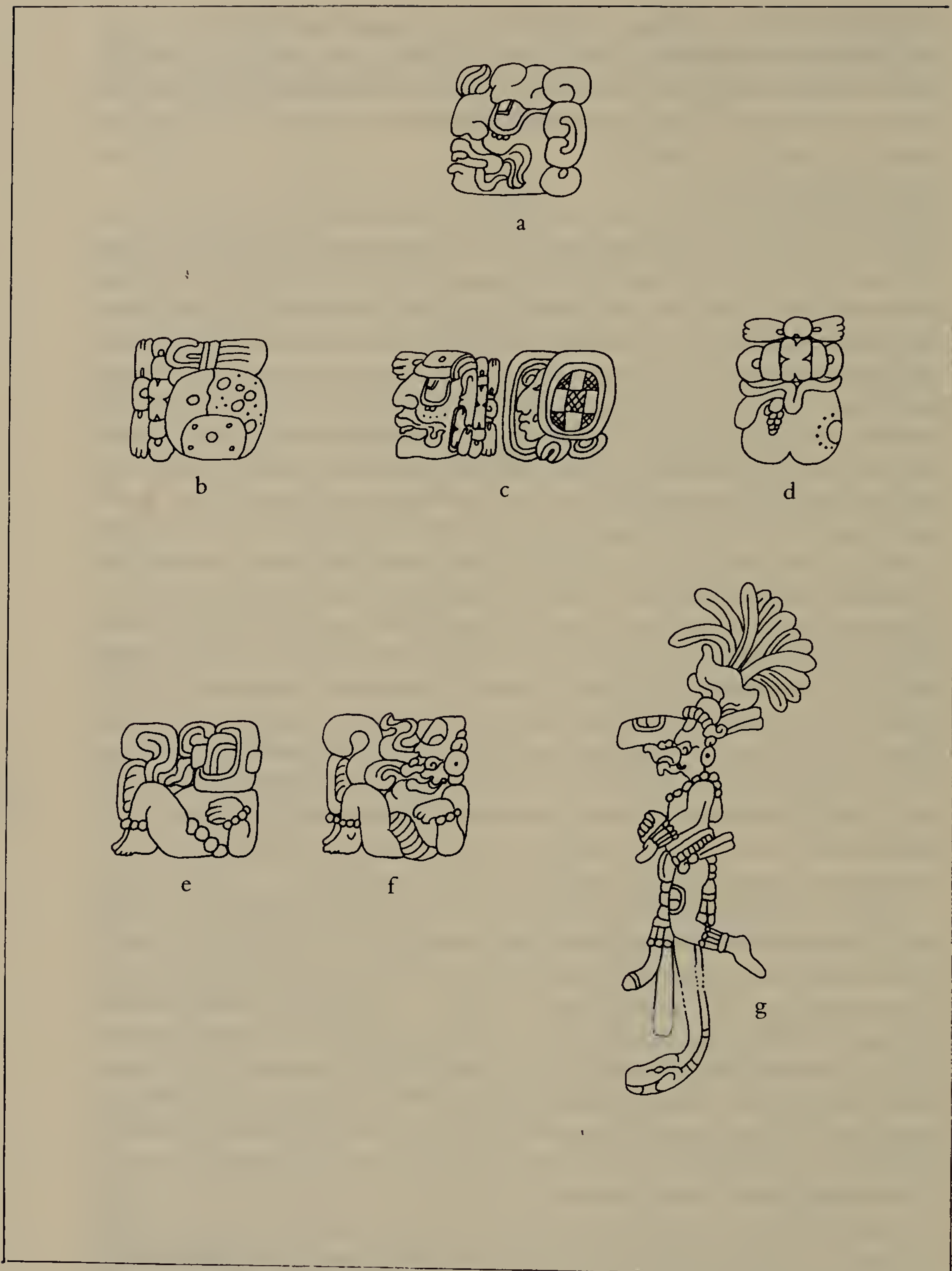


Figure 5. a. T1011 GI nominal glyph, Tablet of the Cross; b. T74.184.145:539 GIII nominal glyph, Tablet of the Sun; c. T1010.184.74, T239.594 GIII nominal glyph, Tablet of the Sun; d. T74:184:529 Period Ending place-name, Aguateca Stela 1; e. T1030f GII nominal glyph, Tablet of the Foliated Cross; f. T1030g GII nominal glyph, Tablet of the Foliated Cross; g. God K/GII manikin scepter, Yaxchilan Lintel 1.

amples, the mirror is perforated with a torch or axe head that may or may not smoke.

In the Postclassic codices, the nominal glyph for God K is a portrait that has the smoking torch of GII in the forehead. GII has been equated with God K. GII/God K is the most prominent deity in the Classic images.[7] Because God K's name glyph is a portrait with easily recognizable traits, God K can be identified in many images. He appears as an object held by rulers (referred to in the literature as a manikin scepter), or emerging from the serpent ceremonial bar. In the images, one of his legs is often in the form of a serpent.

The diagnostic elements of God K's name glyph can all be related to fire. Mirrors can be used to create fires, which explains the smoking mirror in God K's forehead. The torch is directly related to the maintaining of fire. The axe is also related to fire, for in some Maya myths, lightning was said to be created when the rain god hurled his axe through the air, and lightning is the source of fire in nature. Baudez (1989) has argued on the basis of God K's diagnostic elements (smoke, torch, and axe head) that God K was a fire deity. Lounsbury suggested that God K might have been a prototype for the Postclassic Tohil, the fire and thunder deity who was the lineage god of the Quiche, and who was their principal deity (D. Tedlock 1985:49).

Seler (1902–23) suggested that God K represented Bolon Dzacab, a deity mentioned in colonial documents. He based this identification on the fact that God K is the deity in the Dresden New Year pages that correspond to the Ben years. In Landa's discussion of the New Year ceremonies, the deity Bolon Dzacab is in the equivalent New Year context. This deity appears to have lineage affiliations. In some Classic inscriptions, God K does have a *bolon* 'nine' prefix.

A substitution for God K's name is phonetically read *K'awil* by D. Stuart (1987). In the Kaua list, the deity of the Ben years is Ah Kauil, which provides independent evidence for Stuart's reading. Roys (1965:9) associated Kauil with maize, but little else is known about him. J. E. S. Thompson (1970:289) noted that *uil* is the term for sustenance and related "K'auil with maize, the ultimate sustenance of the Maya." Like that of God B, the portrait glyph of God K in the codices does not resemble the illustration of the accompanying deity. This God K deity has maize foliage for a nose, which lends further support to God K's association with maize and to Stuart's reading. The K'awil reading does not preclude God K's association with Bolon Dzacab or with fire, since Maya deities are known by various names and titles and can have multiple attributes. I suspect that all three associations—fire, maize, and lineage—are valid, and that God K was the lineage and patron god of the Classic Maya.

The criteria used to establish the astronomical identities of the

Palenque Triad of deities are as varied as the conclusions regarding their identities. On the basis of GI's birth date on 9 Ik, which is a known calendar name for Quetzalcoatl in the Mexican sources, Kelley identified GI as Venus (1965:115). He also identified GII as an agricultural and possibly a sun deity, and GIII as the war god Ek Ahau. Using a base date in the Madrid codex, Kelley (1980) created a model to explain the calendar names for Mesoamerican deities. From this model, he concluded that 9 Ik was a calendar name for the planet Mercury. Thus he revised his identification of Venus for GI, and now associates both GI and Quetzalcoatl with Mercury. Using this same model, he associated GIII with Saturn. Lounsbury (1985) identified the brothers, GI and GIII, as the prototypes for Hunahpu and Xbalenque, the hero twins of colonial Maya legend. However, although the Quiche *Popol Vuh* version of this myth states that Hunahpu and Xbalenque are the sun and the moon, Lounsbury identified the twins as Venus and the sun, respectively. Studying the iconography of the images, Baudez (1985) suggested that GI and GIII both represented the sun in different aspects. Because a conjunction of planets occurred on a date that is noted at Palenque in association with the triad, Dütting (1984) associated GI with Saturn, GIII with Mars, and GII with Jupiter. The astronomical aspects of the Palenque Triad are further discussed in chapter 6.

The Maize Deities

The Postclassic God E was identified by Schellhas (1904) as a maize deity based on the fact that this deity has an ear of corn and foliage growing from his head. Taube (1985) identified as maize deities a series of Classic deities that have similar corn associations. He demonstrated that the ruler often dressed in the costume of one of these maize deities.

The Paddler Deities

In several scenes carved on bones from Tikal Burial 116, a canoe is shown being paddled by two deities seated on the bow and stern. They have been nicknamed the Paddlers (Mathews n.d.b). Their passengers are a young maize god and an assortment of highly animated characters. The first Paddler has jaguar features and a "twisted cord" between his eyes. As the head variant for the number seven, J. E. S. Thompson (1950) called him the Jaguar God of the Underworld and the personification of the night sun or underworld sun. An alternative identification for this "twisted cord jaguar" deity is discussed at length in chapter 6. The second deity is an aged god with a stingray spine stuck through his nose. The Paddler's name glyphs are usually portraits of the deities, but D. Stuart (1982, 1988) has shown a substitution where the portrait glyphs are replaced with the signs *ak-*

bal 'night' and *kin* 'sun, day', respectively. In these contexts, the cartouches for the *akbal* and *kin* signs often take the shape of a paddle. The Paddlers do not appear in the Postclassic codices.

God C

Schellhas's God C appears with great frequency in both Classic and Postclassic texts as a head (T1016). Although he appears as an actor in the codices, his role has been elusive to determine. The God C head appears infixed on many objects. It has the phonetic value of *k'u* in the spelling of the Yucatec month name Cumku (*kumk'u*) (Ringle 1988:7). Ringle, John Carlson, and D. Stuart (cited in Ringle 1988: 18) have independently reached the same conclusion that it carries this value in the hieroglyphic text, although it was Barthel (in 1952) who first proposed this value (Ringle 1988:2). *K'u* (*ch'u* in Cholan languages) carries the meanings of "god, sacred, idol, temple, pyramid, cedar, soul, heart, divine, holy." Ringle argued against God C's identification as a specific deity and suggested that the context of the sign establishes what meaning it had. He illustrated several examples where the sign could have the meanings listed above. When the God C head appears as an infix on objects it may function to indicate that the object has a "soul," that it is "holy" or "divine," or that it belongs to a god.

Place-Names

The first clue to the historical content of the inscriptions occurred when Berlin (1958) identified a glyph that could be associated with specific sites (fig. 3f). Not knowing whether these glyphs referred to a place name, a lineage, or a polity, Berlin chose to use what he thought was a neutral term, "emblem glyph." The prefix of this three-part compound is composed of liquid trimmed with drops (fig. 3g). J. E. S. Thompson (1950:276) referred to this prefix as the "water group," but D. Stuart (1982, 1988) has strongly argued it is blood. Various elements appearing with the drops are analyzed by Stuart (this prefix will be discussed in more detail below). The superfix of the emblem glyph has been read *ah po, ah pop,* and *ahau,* which all mean "lord" (Lounsbury 1973) (fig. 3h). The main sign is a variable element. The distribution pattern of emblem glyphs shows that a particular main sign occurs predominantly with the monuments from one site, although in some instances several sites, such as Palenque and Torteguero, have the same main sign. Both Yaxchilan and Palenque have double emblem glyphs.

The emblem glyph functions as a title in nominal phrases where it is commonly translated as "lord of X" or "blood lord of X." Some main signs also occur without the "blood group" and "lord" affixes,

and have instead a locative preposition suggesting that the main sign functions as a geographic location (Mathews 1985). Kelley (1976: 213) preferred a place-name function for the main sign, specifically the name of the site, while Mathews (1985) argued that the main signs are polity designations. A polity function for the main sign of the emblem glyph is now the most commonly accepted interpretation. The distribution of emblem glyphs has been used by several scholars to create political models (Marcus 1976; Mathews 1985, 1985; Johnson & Houston 1987). I believe, however, that the main sign of the emblem glyph is the name for a cave associated with the origin of the protagonist's lineage. The evidence for this belief is presented in chapter 6.

Stuart and Houston (1987) and D. Stuart (1987) have recently identified place-names in the inscriptions that they believe refer to individual cities. Although I agree with their interpretation of these glyphs as place-names, I disagree with their identification of these locations; my alternate interpretation of these places as sites of cave rituals is discussed in chapter 3.

Historical Names and Events

Berlin (1959) was the first scholar to recognize that certain glyphs in the Classic inscriptions represented personal names. Using comparative analysis, Proskouriakoff (1960, 1963, 1964) identified a sequential series of historical events in the inscriptions of Piedras Negras and Yaxchilan that state the birth, inauguration, and death of several rulers. Thus, she demonstrated that the personal names in the text were historical. From the inscriptions of the Late Classic period, famous personalities emerge: Pacal II of Palenque, Bird Jaguar IV of Yaxchilan, Ah Cacao of Tikal, 18 Jog of Copan, Shield God K of Dos Pilas, Smoking Squirrel of Naranjo, Two Legged Sky of Quirigua, Lord Moon of Caracol, and Jaguar Paw of Seibal, to name but a few.

Since Proskouriakoff's breakthrough, other scholars have identified a variety of events conducted by these kings and their subjects. Some of the earliest studies include those by Kelley (1962a), Berlin (1965), Barthel (1968), Coe and Benson (1966), Lounsbury (1974, 1976, 1980), Mathews and Schele (1974), Coggins (1975), and Jones (1977). Relationship glyphs between parent and child were discovered by Jones (1977) and further documented by Schele, Mathews, and Lounsbury (1977), Mathews (1980), Stuart (1985) and Hopkins (in press).

Pre-accession events were identified by Lounsbury (1980:107) and Schele (1984) in the Classic texts (these pre-accession rituals will be discussed in chapter 7). Mathews and Justeson (1984) were able to identify specific "offices", or "titles" that rulers took at accession.

Many of these officers and titles have not yet been clearly deciphered, and we still have no firm understanding of their political or religious significance.

Proskouriakoff (1964:189) identified a title associated with both male and female secondary actors at Yaxchilan. She called these actors the "'moon sign' family" based on the fact that the "moon sign" was a component of this title. Mathews and Justeson (1984) identified this title as one of the offices taken in accession statements. Peter Mathews (pers. comm., 1984) and David Stuart (1983, 1986c) read this title as *cahal,* based on a phonetic rendering of the compound.

The *cahal* title appears to indicate that the person is a member of a lineage of lesser importance than that of the ruler. On Kuna Lacanja Lintel 1, the protagonist of the story is said to be the cahal of the ruler of Bonampak (David Stuart, pers. comm. 1986). The father of this cahal also carries the cahal title, which suggests that the title may have been hereditary. Cahals may have played a military role or may have governed subsidiary towns. Several protagonists who had previously been identified as rulers are now recognized as having been these lesser lords (this is discussed further in chapter 7). At Yaxchilan, the wife of the ruler Bird Jaguar IV carries the cahal title. If the cahal title is hereditary, this may indicate a marriage alliance between the ruler and a cahal lineage.

In various hieroglyphic texts, women conduct rituals or act in secondary roles. Sometimes a woman is directly identified as the mother of the protagonist, and in some rare cases she is identified as the wife of the protagonist. Epigraphic evidence for marriage alliances between sites is based on the fact that the wives and mothers of several rulers carry emblem glyphs that are foreign to their husband's site. For example, the mother of Yax Pac of Copan carries the Palenque emblem glyph, and the wife of Smoking Squirrel of Naranjo carries the Tikal emblem glyph. In several texts from Yaxchilan, Bird Jaguar IV is associated with two women. Despite the lack of epigraphic evidence, these women have been referred to in the scholarly literature as his wives (Schele & M. Miller 1986:178). Although there is evidence of polygamy in the Postclassic period, the assumption of a marital relationship in these cases may be premature.

Narrative Quality of the Hieroglyphic Text

Floyd Lounsbury pioneered a method of analysis that uses approximate semantic values to paraphrase the text (cited in Schele 1982:7). By paraphrasing a text, a general understanding of what the story is about can be obtained even when portions of the text are still undeciphered. Lounsbury's paraphrasing technique led to the discovery

of couplets (Lounsbury 1980:107; Schele 1982:42–53; Josserand, in press). A couplet states the same event twice but varies the manner in which it is expressed. The purpose of the couplet is to give additional information about the event in a poetic form.

By comparing hieroglyphic texts with modern Chol folktales, Josserand has noted that the events in a hieroglyphic text form a narrative plot or story line (Josserand 1984, 1987, in press; Josserand & Schele 1984). The following paragraphs present a brief summary of Josserand's findings.

The sentence-level units in a hieroglyphic text can be grouped into narrative "episodes," which in turn can be grouped into larger units called "sections." The dates in the narrative set the time frame and connect the various events of the story into a story line. A reference to an earlier date and event is one of the indicators that may signal the beginning of a new episode in the narrative. Within a section, all Calendar Round dates are tied by Distance Numbers (or other means) to a common "time anchor," a date whose Long Count position is stated. A new section begins when the "time anchor" changes—that is, when a new Long Count date is used as the reference point.

Within a narrative, some events are central to the plot and are said to be "on the event line," while other events may be mentioned only to provide background information. This use of foregrounding and backgrounding creates a narrative plot: the foregrounded events form the backbone of the story, while the backgrounded events provide additional information and details. If the same event is mentioned more than once in a text, usually it will be foregrounded (marked with the PEI, T679, or some other device) the first time it is mentioned, and backgrounded (marked with AEI, T126) thereafter.

Each episode that contains more than one event has a pivotal or "peak event." In longer texts, the event line builds to a climax that is the "peak event" of the entire narrative. The peak event of the narrative is often given prominence by the use of altered syntax. For example, the Calendar Round may be moved to the end of the sentence. For a more detailed explanation of the narrative structure, readers are referred to Josserand's publications.

An excellent example of how the dates in a text form episode breaks is found on the Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus lid at Palenque. The main text of this story runs along the side of the lid. Lounsbury (1974) demonstrated that the T23.19.585a verb that is repeated ten times in this narrative is a verb for death, and that these death dates belong to the ruler Pacal II and a series of his ancestors. In his initial discussion of the inscription, Lounsbury began the inscription at the southwest corner. Josserand (pers. comm. 1987) demonstrated that this would end the story in the middle of a sentence; in-

Palenque Tomb Sarco

Table 1
The Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus Lid Narrative

Long Count Date	Date (A.D.)	Event
9.4.10.14.17	525	death of Chaacal I
9.6.11.0.16	565	death of Kan Xul I
9.6.16.10.7	570	death of Chaacal II
9.7.0.0.0	573	Period Ending Chan Bahlum I
9.7.9.5.5	583	death of Chan Bahlum I
9.9.11.10.12	624	death of Lady Kanal Ikal
9.8.19.4.6	11 August 612	death of Ac Kan
9.8.18.14.11	9 March 612	death of Pacal I
9.10.0.0.0	633	Period Ending Lady Zac Kuk
9.10.7.13.5	640	death of Lady Zac Kuk
9.10.10.1.6	643	death of Kan Bahlum Mo
9.8.9.13.0	603	birth of Pacal II
9.12.11.5.18	683	death of Pacal II

stead, the story must begin with the death of Chaacal I on the south east corner (1989). The dates in the order in which they are presented in the story are found in table 1. As can be seen from this table, the story does not run in chronological order. Each step back in time marks the beginning of a new episode.[8]

The decipherment of Maya hieroglyphs has reached a stage where we have some idea about the content of the narrative beyond the statistical information, such as birth, accession, death, and genealogy. We must now try to understand the "plots" of the narratives as well as the motivation for these stories. The relationships between the sentences in episodes and the relationships between the episodes in a section are crucial to our understanding of what a story is about.

The Image

The images found on Late Classic Maya sculpture illustrate a variety of actions performed by different actors. Many actors and some objects appear to be naturalistically depicted, while other components in the images are animated or personified symbols.

Generally speaking, the focus of an image is on one action carried out by a principal actor. This focus can be accomplished by the elaboration of costume, directional gaze of the actors, frontal pose, or domination of the picture plane (occupying the majority of space with text, action, or costume). Placing an actor on the plane closest

to the viewer by the use of overlapping can visually foreground that actor, and this also places emphasis on him.

On several monuments from Piedras Negras, an actor sits inside a niche. Proskouriakoff (1960) identified these actors as the historical rulers named in the text. The text identifies the who (the subject of the text), the what (the verb), and the when (the date) of the narrative. The fact that the image illustrates a specific person carrying out a specific action on a specific day means that this illustrated action must have occurred at a specific location. How does the artist convey to the viewer where this illustrated action occurred? The setting or location is often represented in the image by a zoomorph. The actor can stand in front or on top of these zoomorphs, or even inside the zoomorph's mouth. As will be discussed at length in chapter 3, some of these zoomorphs, such as "cauac monsters" and serpents, represent cave openings and cave passages.

In many Classic scenes, sacrificial victims are portrayed sprawled out under the ruler's feet or kneeling in submission beside him. Secondary lords also appear as attendants to the ruler. At some sites, females also appear in the scene.

Costume is one of the ways males and females are distinguished in the images. The costumes of the male actors are the standard Mesoamerican wardrobe: loincloth, apron, hip cloth, belt, cape, and sandals. Women most often wear long *huipils* 'blouses', which hang down to ankle length. A skirt can sometimes be seen under the *huipil*.

The costumes are richly decorated. In some cases, the textiles are depicted with such detail that the threads of the cloth are visible. The weaving techniques and the symbols woven into the cloth have been correlated with modern Chiapas textile art (Morris 1985). Jaguar skin and featherwork are also employed in clothing. Jade is not only worn as jewelry but also sewn onto clothing. There is a wide array of headdress styles, though some headdresses share similar elements, such as the so-called *tlaloc* sign. Deity heads stacked on top of bird and animal heads appear in headdresses. For the most part, their identity and meaning remain a mystery.

One particular skirt found on both male and female actors is made of a network of jade beads. The end of the belt hangs over the groin area and is adorned with a so-called *xoc* head that has a shell emerging from its mouth. Jeffrey Miller (1974) suggested that the costume was feminine because of the presence of the skirt. To explain this costume's use by men, Schele (1983) suggested that males were playing the role of a "mother." Taube (1985) noted that this costume is, in fact, the costume of a maize deity. Why both males and females wear the costume of the maize lord is unknown. It is possible that

they are imitating the role of this deity. As discussed above, Maya lords did dress in the costume of the rain god.

Some costumes have been demonstrated to be specific to an activity, such as the costume worn by ball players. A Classic Maya viewing an illustration of his ruler in a ball player's outfit would have no more trouble identifying it than we should have identifying a modern football player's outfit. However, while a Classic Maya would understand the meaning and implication of his ruler playing ball, we lack this common knowledge about Classic Maya culture.

Conclusion

This brief overview demonstrates the slow but steady progress that has been made in deciphering individual hieroglyphic words and in understanding the narrative quality of the text as a whole. I would like to stress, however, that just because we have discovered the pronunciation of a hieroglyph, we should not assume that we understand its meaning in its various contexts.

In the following chapter, I will examine the scenes found on a wide variety of sculptures in order to demonstrate the relationship between the text and the image found in a scene as well as the relationship between scenes that are found in proximity to each other.

2
The Relationship Between Text and Image

The sciences which they taught were . . . how to read and write with the letters and characters, with which they wrote, and drawings which illustrate the meaning of the writing.
—Bishop Diego de Landa

It is not always apparent which of the many events from a Maya text is being illustrated in the associated image. I will analyze here a series of monuments that demonstrate a device used by Maya artists to clarify what event from the story was being illustrated. All art forms have principles that underlie their organization; in the case of Maya art, my hypothesis is that because the scenes on Maya monuments are literary stories, the organizing principle primarily deals with the placement of the blocks of text. The sentences of the texts are sometimes found above, beside, or below the image area, but quite often a sentence is broken into several blocks of text, and these are placed within the image area. In order to read the sentence the eye is led to, and often through, the action of the image. This *framing convention* identifies the actor and the action of the image as the subject and event of the accompanying text.

The following discussion will examine a wide range of monument types including stelae, lintels, and wall panels. The stories on these monuments range from narratives with one episode to those with multiple episodes. The method I use to analyze these stories is simply to read them as they would be viewed if one were actually standing before them.

Yaxchilan Stela 1

A very clear example of the direct relationship between the event of the text and the action of the image is shown on the front of Yaxchilan Stela 1 (fig. 6).[1] The text is composed of a date, a verb, and a subject. As demonstrated by J. E. S. Thompson (1950) and Kelley (1976), dates can be elaborated by use of the Initial Series Long Count, the Supplementary Series, and the station in the 819-day count, in addition to the standard Calendar Round. On Yaxchilan Stela 1, the date (9.16.10.0.0 1 Ahau 3 Zip, or 17 March A.D. 761) is elaborated by the use of all of these methods. The elaboration of the date is a device used to place emphasis not on the date but rather on the event that occurred on that date. For example, one might write that in the year of Our Lord nineteen hundred and thirty-six, in the month of the Harvest Moon, in the first month of autumn, on the tenth day, Nicholas was born. The important point of such a sentence would be the baby's birth, and not the date.

The subject's nominal phrase can also be elaborated by the use of titles, emblem glyphs, and genealogical statements. Although it is possible that the artist chose a series of titles for some other reason, given the narrative quality of the texts, I suspect that the specific titles used were relevant to the story. On Stela 1, the subject's name is elaborated by the use of titles and emblem glyphs. He is the Late Classic ruler of Yaxchilan, Bird Jaguar IV.

The verb in the text is a pictograph that shows a hand (T710) with drops falling from it. The image illustrates an actor with liquid falling from his hands. The liquid takes the form of a scroll trimmed with drops. This gesture has been referred to as "hand-scattering" in the literature. The meaning of the hand-scattering action will be discussed later in this chapter, but it is clear that in this case the event of the text is the action of the image.

The text is placed in two vertical blocks that frame the central actor. To read the sentence, the eye must move from the Initial Series introductory glyph at the top right, down the right block of text, up the diagonal line created by the actor's arm, and then down the left text. By reading the sentence, the eye is led directly through the action of the image. We have been told that he "scattered" and we have been shown that he scattered. Both the text and the image function in a narrative capacity. Their relationship is symbiotic in that each contributes different kinds of information that enrich the other.

Kubler (1969:5) stated that in Maya art the text tells the story by naming and the image tells the story by qualifying or describing. He concluded that the image carries nearly the entire burden of historical



Figure 6. Yaxchilan Stela 1 (drawing after Teobert Maler 1901–03).

Yaxchilan Stela 1

description. The image can convey information about the event (the setting, the costumes, the pomp and pageantry) that is not easily expressed by the text in the limited space of public monuments. It is true that the image does provide the dramatic impact of the story. However, the "describing" function of the image is also found in the pictographic nature of the text. In the same regard, the "naming" function of the text is also found in the signs that appear in the image.

Yaxchilan Stela 6

Lounsbury's discovery (1980) of couplet structures in hieroglyphic texts is important not only in terms of the text itself, but also in terms of the relationship between the text and the image. In some cases, the text may form a couplet with the image, so that the action carried out in the image will not be that of the specific verb used in the text. For example, in the image on Yaxchilan Stela 6 (fig. 7), the actor carries out the same scattering action that is seen on Stela 1. The text states the event to be the completion of 2 katuns of rule by Bird Jaguar III. The information that is written in the text combines with the information illustrated in the image to form a couplet. The text tells us Bird Jaguar III completed 2 katuns of rule; the image shows us that on this occasion he scattered.

Like Stela 1, the text on Stela 6 is divided into two blocks that frame the actor. The placement of the glyph blocks is deliberate. In order to read the sentence, which begins on the left side with an Initial Series date, the eye is led down the left text to the action of the image and then up the actor's arm to the right-side text and the completion of the sentence. Again, by reading the sentence, the viewer is led to the action of the image. We have been told, and we have been shown.[2]

Tikal Stela 22

On Tikal Stela 22, the image shows a ruler "scattering" (fig. 8). The text has been broken down by Josserand (in press) into two episodes. The first episode (A1–A9) states the Period Ending event on 9.17.0.0.0 (24 January, A.D. 771). It can be paraphrased as follows: "13 Ahau 18 Cumku was the seventeenth katun; The tun was ended by Ruler C of Tikal." This episode is divided between the two blocks of text. In order to read the first episode, the viewer's eye is drawn through the action of the image. In fact, the falling drops in the image lead the eye from the upper text down to the lower text. Just like Yaxchilan Stela 6, the first episode and the image form a couplet. The first episode states that the ruler ended the seventeenth katun, and the image illustrates that on this occasion he scattered.

The second episode begins at B9 with the backgrounded accession of Ruler C, which occurred some two years earlier. This sen-

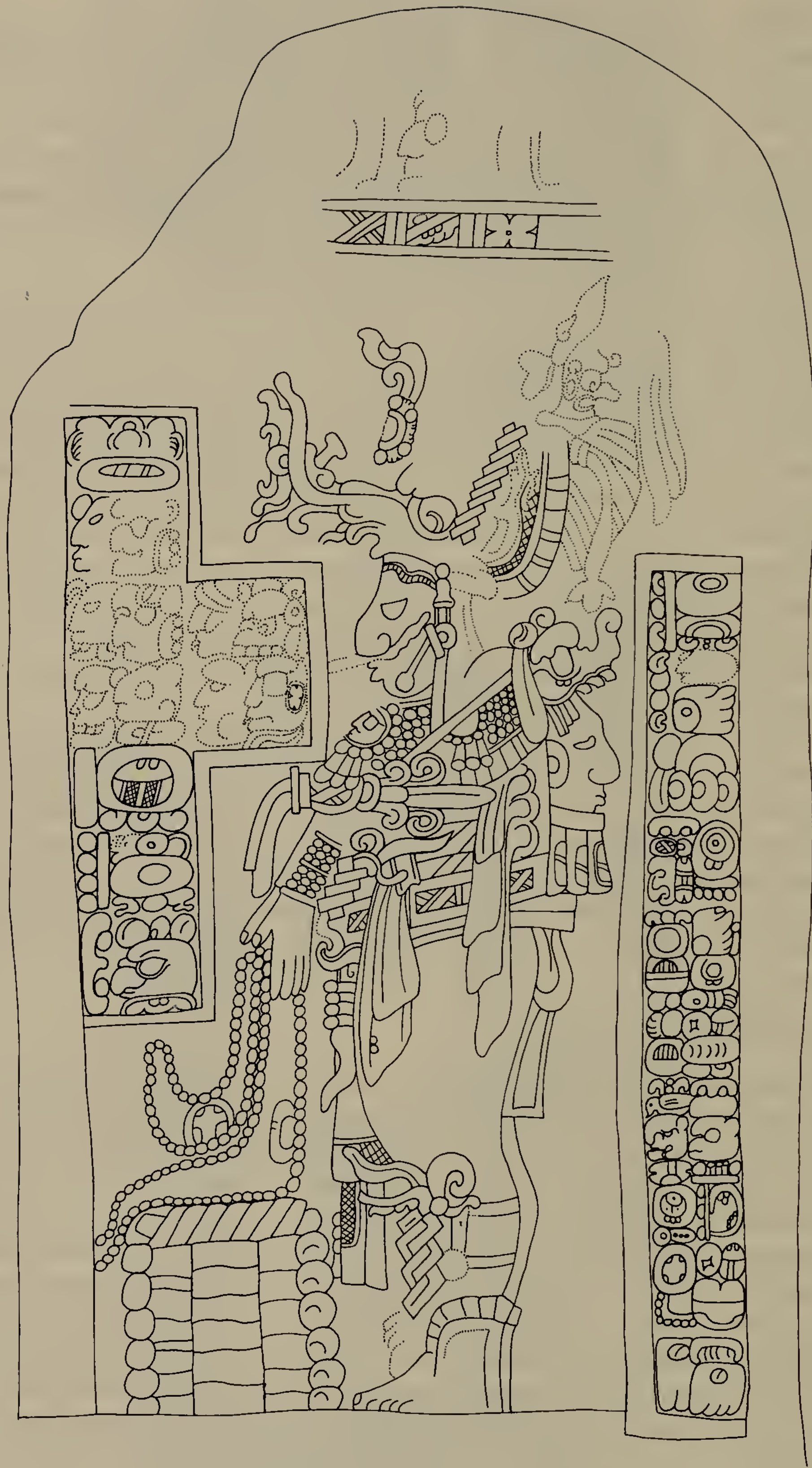


Figure 7. Yaxchilan Stela 6 (drawing after Teobert Maler 1901–03).

Yaxchilan Stela 6

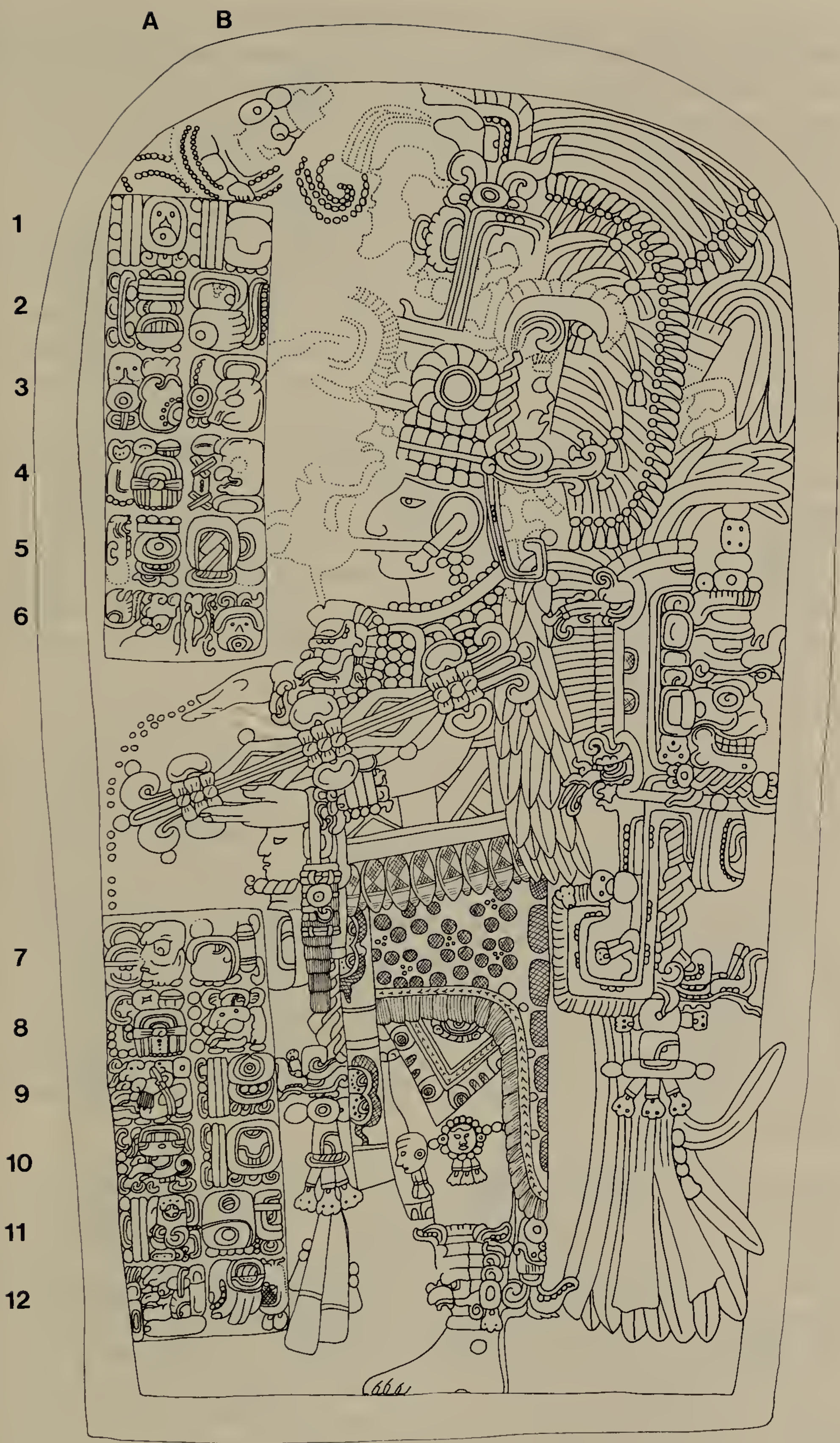


Figure 8. Tikal Stela 22 (drawing after William Coe—Jones and Satterthwaite 1982).

Tikal Stela 22

tence states the accession as his "seating as Chac" and then moves forward by a Distance Number to a restatement of the Period Ending event, using a hand-scattering verb. If the omitted dates are added to the paraphrase, this sentence reads: "It was sixteen and twenty days and two tuns since 11 Kan 12 Kayab, when he was seated as Chac, and then he scattered on 13 Ahau 18 Cumku."

Through the careful placement of the glyph blocks we have been led through a story, both verbally and visually. The text of the first episode (the Period Ending event) frames the action of the image. The restatement of the Period Ending event as a scattering event is the foregrounded event in the second episode. Clearly, the event illustrated is the Period Ending event and concurrent scattering by Ruler C.

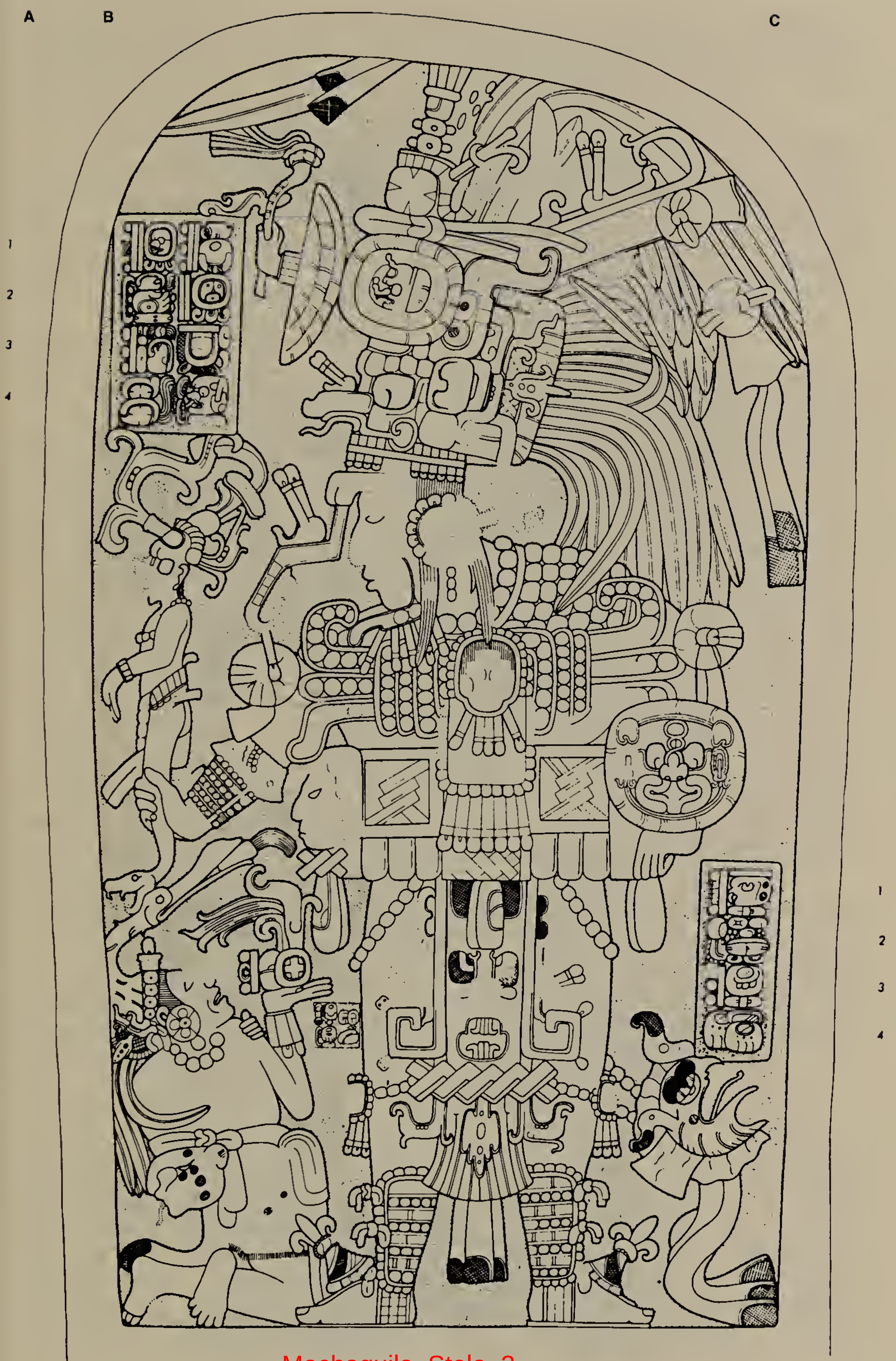
The second episode presents the hand-scattering as the focused event, with the accession used as background information. There must be a reason why the accession and the hand-scattering are linked in the same story. The relationship between these two events appears to be causal. The implication seems to be that because Ruler C accedes as "Chac," he then gets to perform the Period Ending rites. The second episode is not so much an independent statement as it is a qualifier of the first episode.

Machaquila Stela 2

On the front of Machaquila Stela 2, the text is again divided into two blocks (fig. 9). The first sentence (A1–A2) states the date 12 Chicchan 13 Cumku. The Long Count position for this date is 9.18.10.7.5 (11 January, A.D. 801). The verb is a compound of the form "*u tun* in hand," which is normally associated with Period Ending dates. The next sentence introduces a change in the time frame with the earlier date of 9.18.10.0.0 10 Ahau 8 Zac (19 August, A.D. 800) and names the subject of the event as the Machaquila ruler (B2–C4). This sentence is divided between the two blocks of text. Again, in order to read the text, which identifies the actor and names his action, the reader is led across the image of the body of the actor.

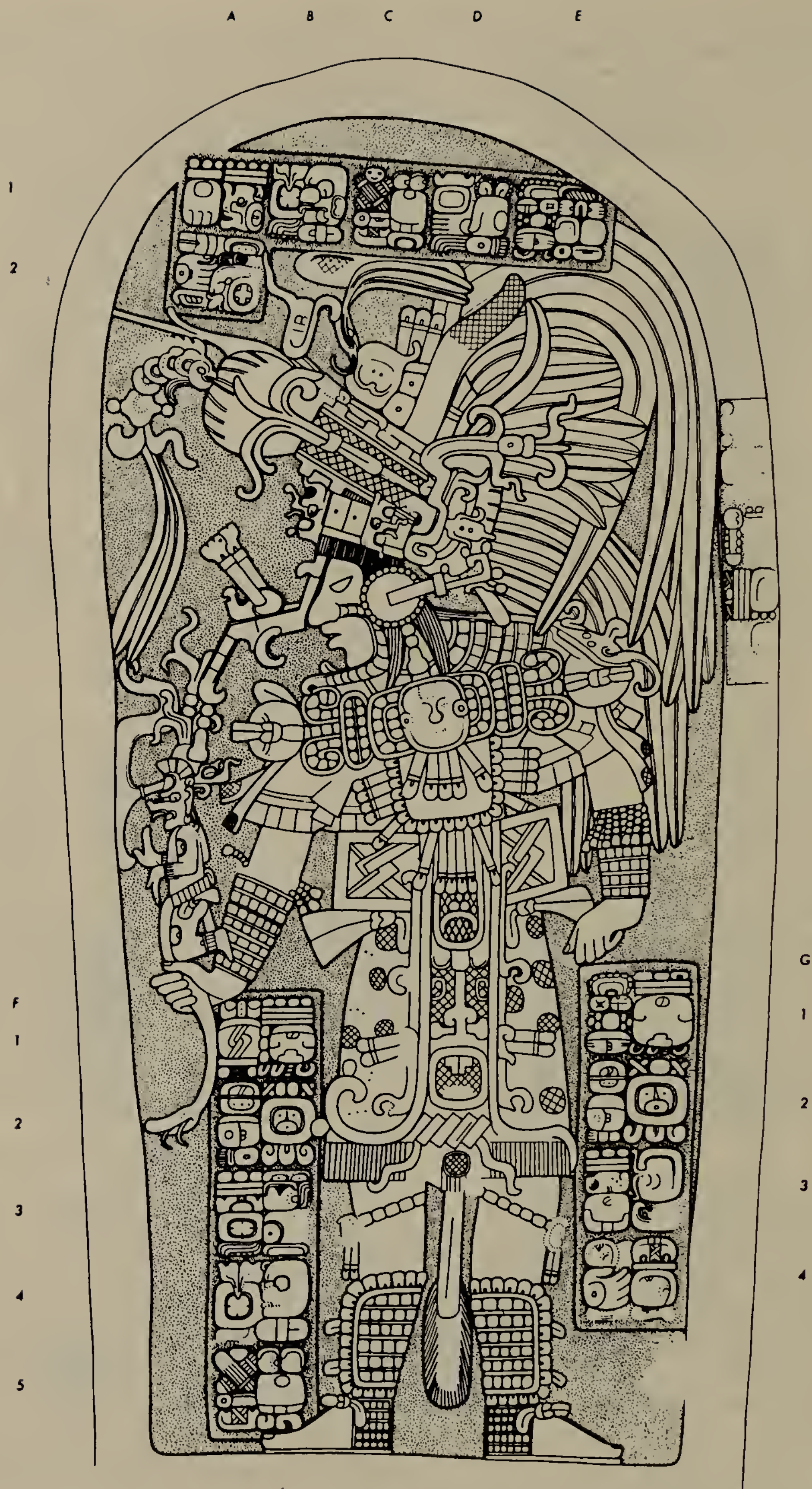
Machaquila Stela 3

Only the front of Machaquila Stela 3 is carved (fig. 10). The text is divided into three blocks. The upper block begins the story on the date of 9.19.4.15.1 8 Imix 14 Zotz (4 April, A.D. 815) with a "bundle in hand" event by the ruler Split-kin Chac (A1–E1). The reader then moves to the text at F1. The time frame of the story progresses forward forty-five days to the Period Ending event by Split-kin Chac on 9.19.5.0.0 2 Ahau 13 Yaxkin (2 June, A.D. 815) (F1–G1). This sentence is divided between the lower left and the lower right blocks. In order to read this sentence, the viewer is drawn across the body of



Machaquila Stela 3

Figure 9. Machaquila Stela 2 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).



Machaquilá Stela 3

Figure 10. Machaquila Stela 3 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

the actor. The final sentence (G1b–G4) states the date as 1 Ahau 13 Cumku, which is 220 days later. It uses an undeciphered verb and a tun ending phrase. A final block of text is found on the upper border of the stela. Regrettably it is eroded beyond decipherment.

A comparison of the Machaquila Stela 2 and Stela 3 images shows that both rulers stand in identical poses, right down to the tilt of their shoulders. Both wear the same mask, pectoral necklace, tied shoulder bundles, mat belts, and God C aprons. Both carry the God K manikin scepter. It is the Period Ending event that frames both actions. Hence both these images illustrate the Period Ending event.

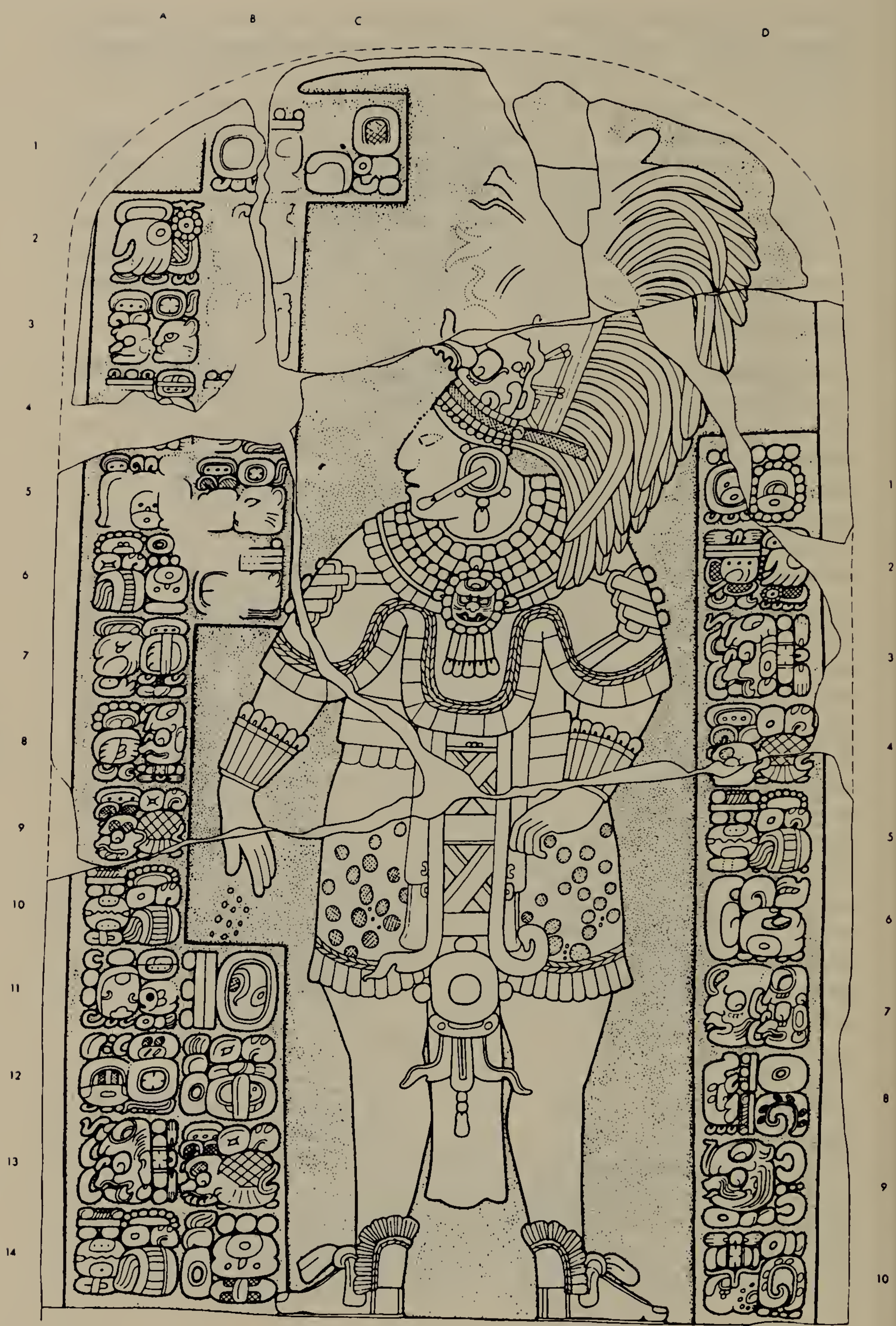
Aguateca Stela 1

On Aguateca Stela 1, the text is divided into two blocks that run down either side of the monument (fig. 11). The narrative begins on the left with an eroded date and a hand-scattering event by Ruler III, which is backgrounded by the use of an AEI. The story moves forward to a date some five months later, which appears to be that of his death (A4–A6). Moving forward four days, the story introduces a new subject, Ruler IV (B6–A10). The event on this date is undeciphered. The time frame then moves forward twenty-two days and gives the accession of Ruler IV (A11–A14). Finally the story tells of the 9.15.10.0.0 3 Ahau 3 Mol (30 June, A.D. 741) Period Ending and accompanying hand-scattering event by Ruler IV, which occurred just three days after his accession (A14–D10). This sentence also contains a place-name at D10, which will be discussed in chapter 3. We have been told a story in which the ruler of Aguateca dies just before a major Period Ending event. His successor performs what may be a pre-accession ritual, takes the throne, and then performs the all-important Period Ending event.

The sentence containing the Period Ending event begins in the last glyph block on the left side (A14) and concludes in the block of text on the right (D1–D10). In order to read this hand-scattering sentence, the viewer's eye is led directly across the image of the actor who is handscattering. Once again, we have been told, and we have been shown.

Naranjo Stela 19

The front of Naranjo Stela 19 illustrates a ruler in a hand-scattering pose (fig. 12). A captive kneels next to a bowl at the base of the stela. The text is composed of two episodes. The first sentence (A1–A7) begins with the Period Ending date 9.17.10.0.0 12 Ahau 8 Pax (2 December, A.D. 780) and continues with a hand-scattering verb (A2). The second sentence (A8–A10) is composed of a general verb followed by two glyphs (at A9–A10) that are the nominal glyphs of the



Aguateca Stela 1

Figure 11. Aguateca Stela 1 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

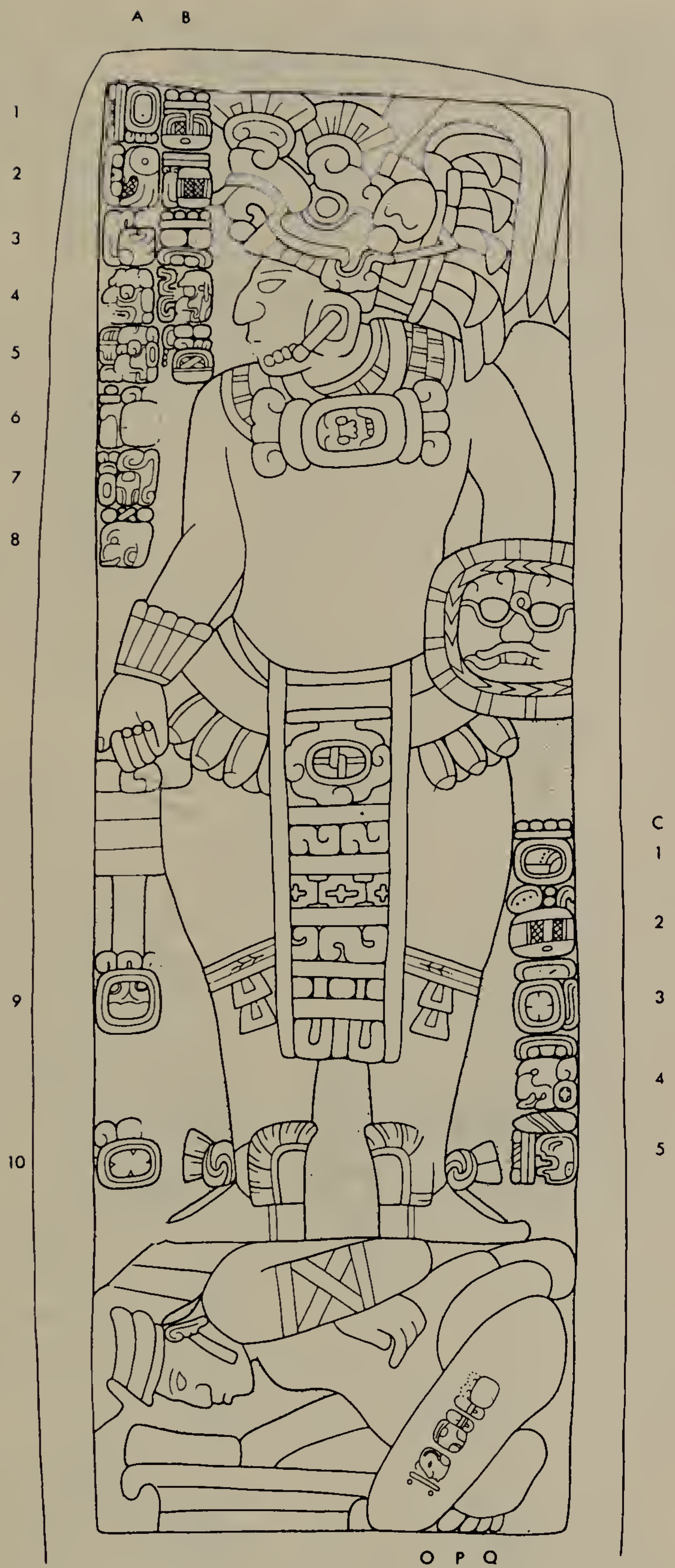


Figure 12. Naranjo Stela 19 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

Naranjo Stela 19

two deities known as the Paddlers. This phrase forms a couplet with the hand-scattering event of the first sentence.

The Paddlers' nominal glyphs are placed in the position in which the hand-scattered drops are usually found. Not only does the reading of the sentence bring the viewer to the action of the image, but the text has actually replaced part of the action of the image. How the hand-scattered drops are related to the Paddlers is discussed in the next chapter.

The third sentence is found at C1–C5. In this sentence, the time frame of the story backs up about three years to an undeciphered event that has no expressed subject. Like that of Tikal Stela 22, this sentence appears to provide background information that is pertinent to the hand-scattering. However, until this event is deciphered, its relevance to the story remains a mystery.

The story continues on the back on the monument, which is extremely eroded. The image illustrates two actors performing a tongue sacrifice. The text gives a Calendar Round date that backs up the time frame of the story some two years. Its eroded condition makes decipherment of the verb and subject impossible.

The Piedras Negras Niche Scenes

Proskouriakoff (1960) first identified the niche scenes at Piedras Negras as accession events, but on Stela 6, Stela 11, and Stela 25, the event in the text that frames the action of the image is the Period Ending event. The Period Ending ceremony is clearly the action being illustrated on Piedras Negras Stela 6 and Stela 11. On the front of Stela 6, the text is a Period Ending statement that is divided into two blocks that frame the scene (Maler 1901–3: pl. XV) (fig. 13). Although the narrative includes birth and accession events for the protagonist, this material is located on the sides of the monument and is given as background information for the Period Ending event.

On Stela 11, the niche scene has no text, but the narrative begins with a Period Ending event on the sides of the stela (Maler 1901–3: pl. XX). In order to read the sentence of the Period Ending event, the viewer's eye is led across the niche scene. This sentence begins on the left side and ends on the right side. The narrative continues on the right side by backing up in time and stating the birth and accession of the protagonist. Thus, once again, the Period Ending frames the image. Furthermore, in the image, the ruler carries a bag infixed with the 4 Ahau date of the Period Ending event.

On Piedras Negras Stela 25, the text runs down the left side, across the top, and then down the right side of the image (Maler 1901–3: pl. XXII). All the events of the narrative frame the image. However, the last-stated event of the narrative is the Period Ending event. By reading the complete narrative, the viewer is taken in a

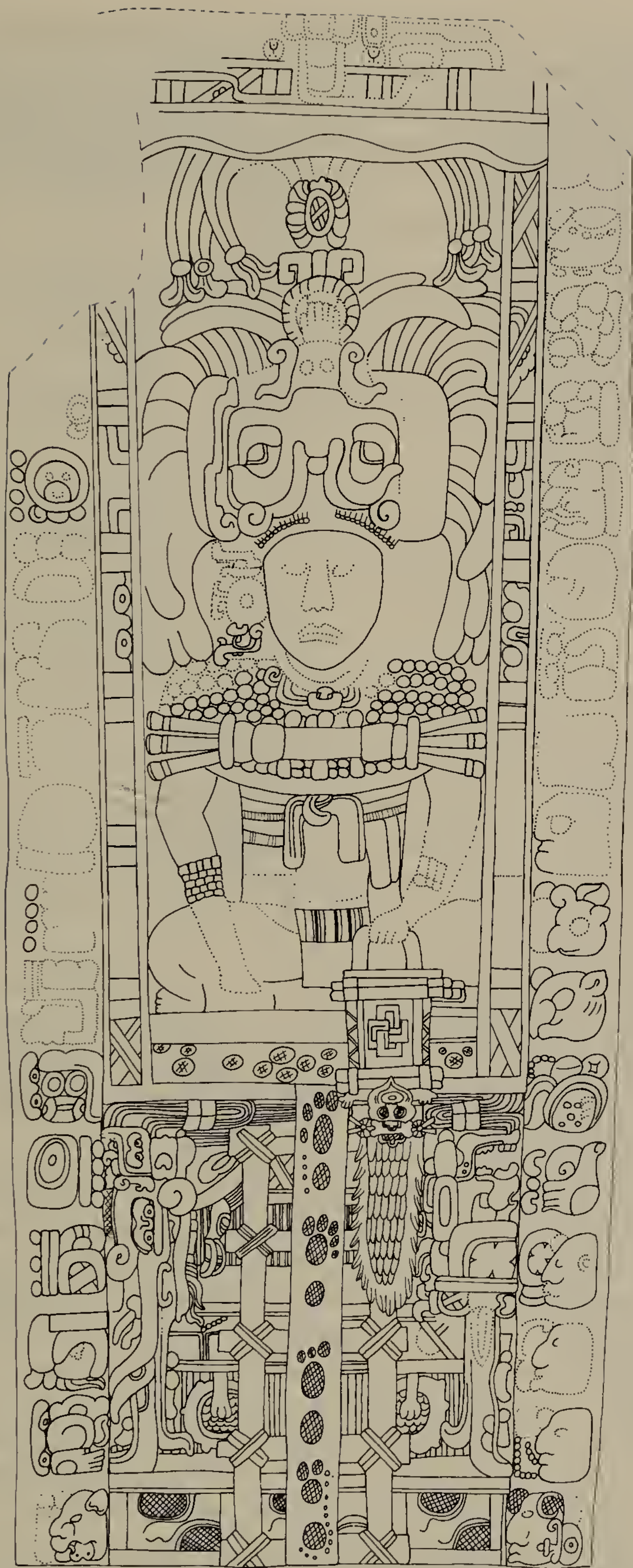


Figure 13. Piedras Negras Stela 6 (drawing after Teobert Maler 1901–03).

Piedras Negras Stela 6

three-quarter circle around the image. The narrative ends with the Period Ending event, but the circle ends with the image itself. The viewer is brought into the image area by the Period Ending statement. We have been told, and we have been shown. These Piedras Negras niche scenes in fact illustrate Period Ending events.

Aguateca Stela 2 and Dos Pilas Stela 16

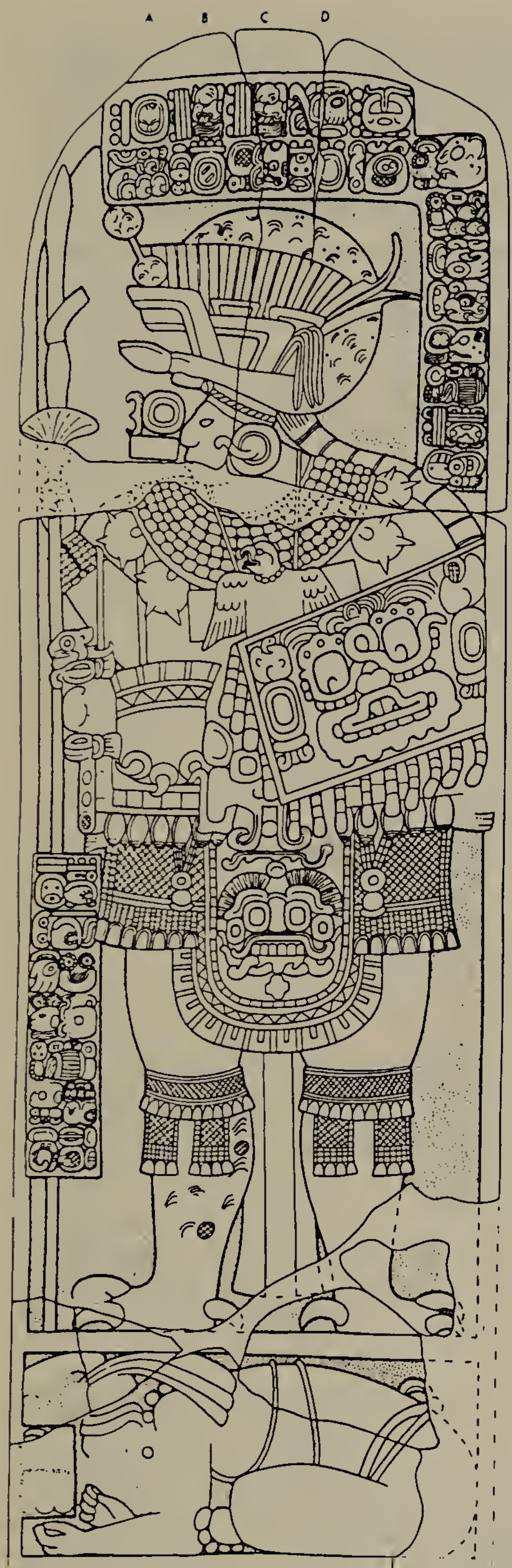
Aguateca Stela 2 and Dos Pilas Stela 16 are two monuments with virtually identical themes and story lines (Graham 1967:10–13) (fig. 14a, b). Both monuments illustrate a ruler standing over a bound captive. It is likely that the bound captive on both monuments is the same individual, but the captive's nominal phrase is eroded on the Aguateca Stela 2.

On Aguateca Stela 2 (fig. 14a), the first episode of the story begins with an event on 9.15.4.6.4 8 Kan 17 Muan (3 December, A.D. 735) that has been nicknamed the "star over shell" event. It consists of a "Venus" sign over a T575 "shell" sign (this event is discussed in chapter 3). It is followed by a locative preposition and the main sign of the Seibal emblem glyph (Seibal is a site near Aguateca). This event does not have an expressed subject. Kelley (1977) noted this date as a first appearance of the planet Venus as evening star. Lounsbury (1982) supported this Venus association.

The time frame on Aguateca Stela 2 then moves forward one day to an "axe" event of unknown meaning, which is followed by another event seven days later.[3] This last event verb can be read phonetically as *nawah* (Lounsbury 1984), but such a word does not appear to have survived in modern Mayan languages, so its meaning is unclear. The second episode begins by backing up in time to the now backgrounded "star over shell" event, and ties it by a Distance Number to the foregrounded Period Ending event on 9.15.0.0.0, which occurred 236 days later. It is the Period Ending event that frames the action of the image.

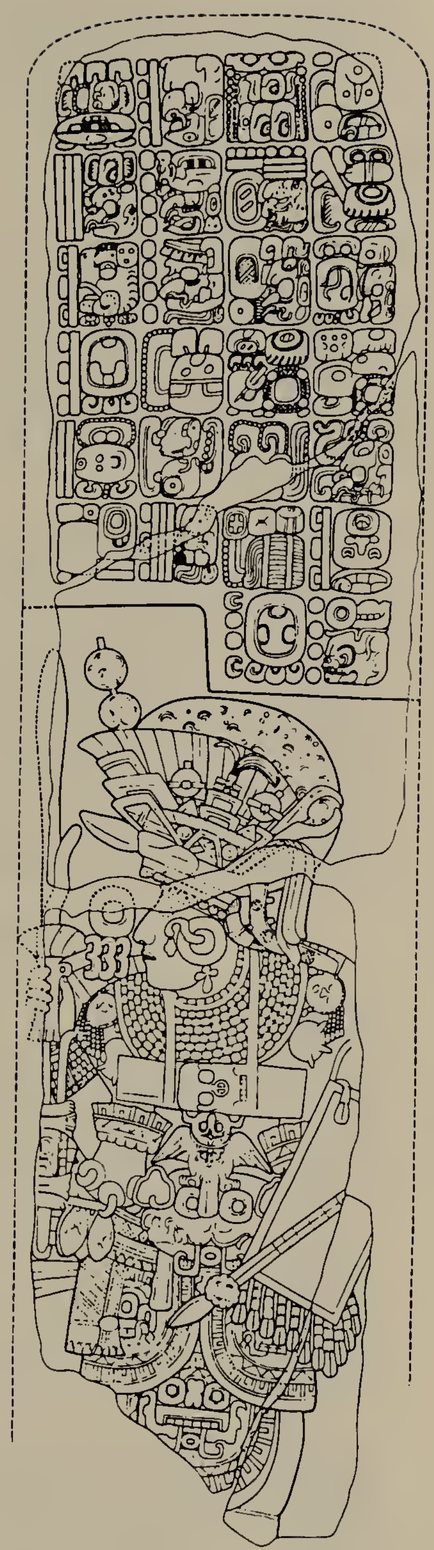
On Dos Pilas Stela 16 (fig. 14b), the narrative begins with the same episode found on Aguateca Stela 2. This Dos Pilas 8 Kan 17 Muan event uses as its verb the "star" element directly over the main sign of the Seibal emblem glyph. The time frame again moves forward a day to the "axe" event and then seven more days to the *nawah* event that frames the action of the image. The story continues on the base of the monument (not included in Graham's drawing). It is possible that the Period Ending event that concluded the narrative on Aguateca Stela 2 was stated on the eroded base of Dos Pilas Stela 16.

Both actors wear similar costumes and perform a similar action, but these similarities cannot be used as proof that these images illustrate the same event. For example, both Naranjo Stela 6 and Stela 20 illustrate an actor holding the double-headed serpent bar with deities



a

Aguateca Stela 2



b

Dos Pilas Stela 2 Top

Figure 14. a. Aguateca Stela 2 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University); b. Dos Pilas Stela 16 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

emerging from its mouth (Graham & von Euw 1975:23, 51), and both texts state that the action occurred on the occasion of the ruler's accession. On Naranjo Stela 14, the actor is again displayed holding the double-headed serpent bar with emerging deities (Graham & von Euw 1975:39), and he is dressed in a costume similar to those of the actors on both Naranjo Stela 6 and Stela 20. However, the text on Naranjo Stela 14 states that the event is a Period Ending ceremony. This means that at totally different events, rulers dressed in similar costumes and performed similar actions. The reverse of this observation is that on the Cross Group Tablets from Palenque the ruler Chan Bahlum is illustrated wearing two different costumes on the day of his accession and performing three different rituals (Schele 1976). Hence, the text is the only clear indication of what event is being performed.

The framing convention, as explained at the beginning of this chapter, is a device to clarify which of the many events from the text is being illustrated in the image. On Aguateca Stela 2, the Period Ending event frames the action, but on Dos Pilas Stela 16, it is the *nawah* event that frames the action. Since the images on these two monuments are essentially the same, although the texts distinguish between the two kinds of events, we must conclude that similar actions occurred at both the Period Ending event and the *nawah* event. In other words, these monuments were erected to complement rather than to duplicate each other.

Narratives on Lintels

Hieroglyphic narratives were not confined to one surface of a monument; stelae often have two sides carved, and in some cases four sides. Therefore, the reading of the stories on these monuments forces the viewer to walk around the monument. On many of the Yaxchilan buildings, the lintels that span the doorways are carved with text and/or image. There is clear evidence that the carved lintels on at least two buildings at Yaxchilan were to be read in sequence. These are Lintels 29, 30, and 31 of Structure 10, and Lintels 27, 59, and 28 of Structure 24. The viewer had to walk from doorway to doorway to read the inscriptions.

The inscription on Structure 24 begins with an Initial Series on Lintel 29 (the left doorway when the viewer faces the building) that is completed on Lintel 30 (the center doorway). The text of Lintel 30 is completed on Lintel 31 (the right doorway). Hence, the reading of the text forces the viewer to move from doorway to doorway. These lintels must be read in sequence from left to right to make any sense.

On Structure 10, the text of Lintel 27 (the left doorway) begins with a Calendar Round date. The last glyph block on Lintel 27 gives

a Distance Number that leads to the Calendar Round date on Lintel 59 (the center doorway). The last glyph on Lintel 59 is a nominal phrase that is continued on Lintel 28 (the right doorway). Therefore, when facing Structure 10, the viewer must move from left doorway to center to right to read the inscription.

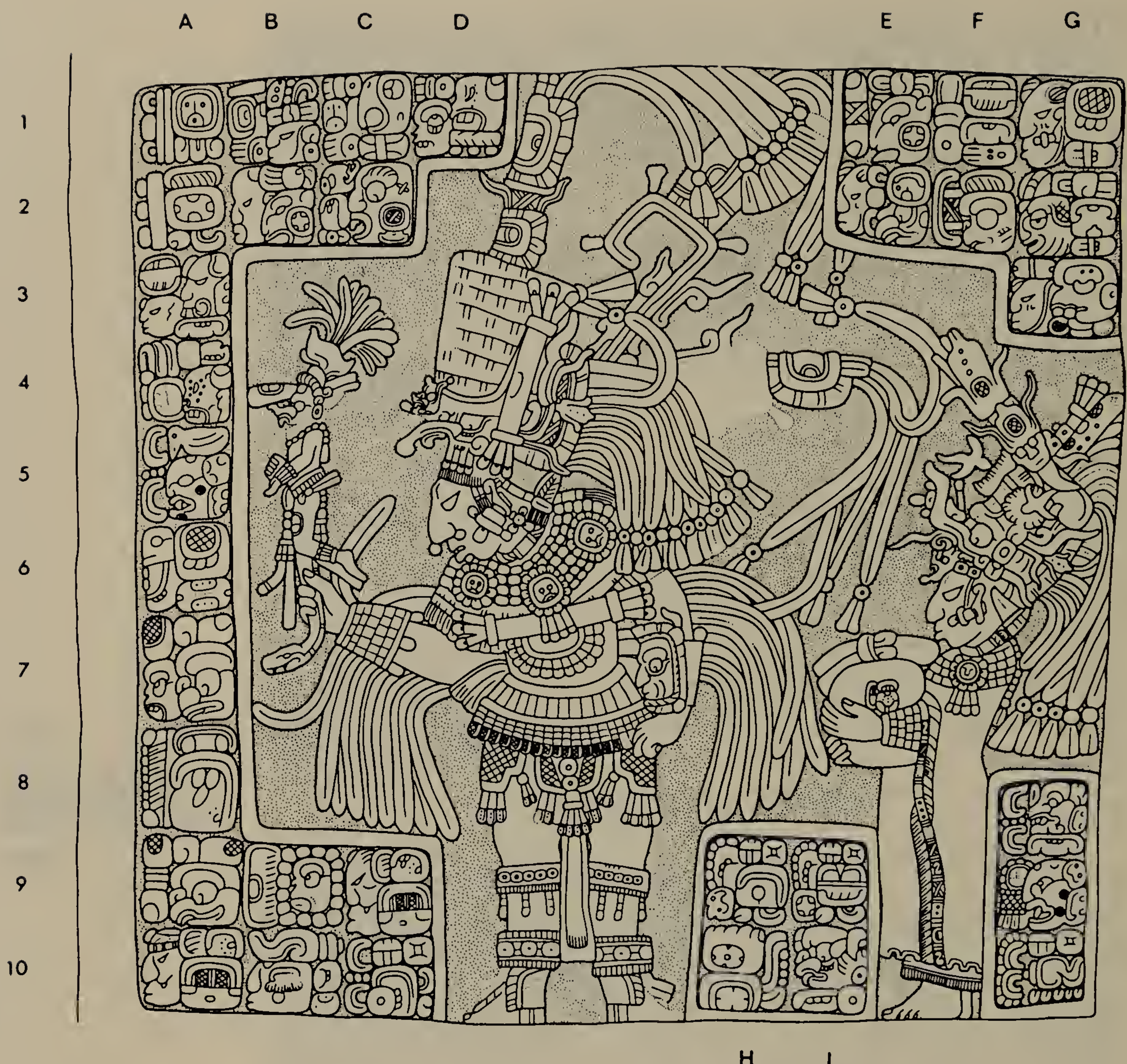
The Lintels of Yaxchilan Structure 33

The sentences on the lintels of Structure 33 do not overlap from one lintel to the next. I believe nevertheless that they form a continuous story line (fig. 15, 16, and 17). As Structure 33 is similar in design to Structure 24 (discussed above) in that they both have three doorways on the front, I will tentatively read the Structure 33 lintels in the same way as the Structure 24 lintels are read—that is, from left to right: Lintel 1, Lintel 2, and Lintel 3.

There is a Calendar Round date on each of the three lintels of Structure 33. The first date, on Lintel 1, is 11 Ahau 8 Tzec, and it includes a Supplementary Series Glyph G that ties it to a Long Count position of 9.16.1.0.0 (3 May, A.D. 752). The second date, found on the central lintel, is 4 Ahau 8 Zotz and lacks the Glyph G notation. Therefore the reader must assume the time frame is proceeding from 9.16.1.0.0 11 Ahau 8 Tzec to the next Long Count position for 4 Ahau 8 Zotz, which is 9.16.6.0.0 (7 April, A.D. 757). The text of Lintel 2 states that the subjects of the event on this date are Shield Jaguar II and his father Bird Jaguar IV. The only Long Count date for 4 Ahau 3 Zotz that occurred when both subjects were alive is 9.16.6.0.0. This confirms the Long Count position.

The third date in the Structure 33 narrative is found on Lintel 3. The date 8 Ahau 3 Zotz includes a Supplementary Series Glyph G, which indicates that this date has the Long Count position of 9.16.5.0.0 (12 April, A.D. 756). The Supplementary Series was included to alert the reader that the time frame has been backed up. Josserand (1984, 1987, in press) has noted that a new episode begins in the story when the time frame backs up. Therefore Lintels 1 and 2 would form the first episode, and Lintel 3 would form the second episode of this narrative. Unlike Lintel 3, Lintels 1 and 2 are visually related in that their texts are completely encased by raised relief. This suggests that this sequence (left, center, right) is the correct reading order for these lintels.

The first episode begins on Lintel 1 with a scene of a male actor holding a God K manikin scepter and a female actor holding a bundle (fig. 15). The text has two sentences, and each sentence is divided into two blocks of text that each frame an actor.[4] The first sentence of the episode begins at A1 with a Calendar Round date. Paraphrased, this sentence reads: "On 11 Ahau 8 Tzec Bird Jaguar held the scepter."[5] The sentence is broken into two blocks of text that frame



Yaxchilan Lintel 1

Figure 15. Yaxchilan Lintel 1 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

the left actor (A1–C10 and H1–I 2). To read the sentence, the eye must move across the top of the left actor, then down the left side of the actor's body, and finally across the body of the actor to the text at H1–I 2. The upside-down U shape of the left actor's feathers complements the movement of the eye as it moves from the text at C10 to the text at J1. The viewer has read about a subject and event in the text, and the viewer has been shown an actor and action in the image. From the text on Structure 10 we know that the accession of Bird

Jaguar occurred on this date. It is most curious, then, that there is no direct reference to his accession in the Lintel 1 text.

The second sentence in the Lintel 1 text is also divided into two blocks. This sentence begins with a verbal phrase (E1–F2) and concludes with the nominal phrase of Lady Great Skull (G1–J3). As no date is stated in this sentence, it is assumed that the time frame has not changed. In order to read the nominal phrase, the viewer's eye is drawn down the body of the actor. Again the glyph blocks of the sentence are placed to lead the viewer past the actor who is the subject of the sentence. The part of Lady Great Skull's nominal phrase from J1–J3 names her as the mother (J1) of Shield Jaguar II (J2–J3) (Mathews 1980:61). On this date, her son Shield Jaguar II was less than three months old. On Yaxchilan Stela 7 the text gives a parentage statement for Shield Jaguar II that names his mother as Lady Great Skull and his father as Bird Jaguar. This Lintel 1 illustrates Bird Jaguar with his consort.

The second scene of the first episode is shown on Lintel 2, where two actors are holding "crosses" (fig. 16). A bird in a diving position is placed on the top of each cross. The text is composed of three sentences broken into seven blocks. The first sentence is found from A to E; paraphrased, it reads: "On 4 Ahau 3 Zotz was the fifth tun anniversary of the accession." Although this date is the fifth tun anniversary of Bird Jaguar's accession, no subject is named. The second sentence begins at F and is divided into three blocks of text: F–H, I1–I 2, and J1–J3. Paraphrased, it reads: "Shield Jaguar held the cross." The compound that refers to the cross is composed of a bat's head suffixed with a *te* 'tree' sign. The bat is infixed with *cauac* elements. Hence, the cross is a tree of some kind (this will be discussed in chapter 3). To read the sentence, the viewer's eye shifts to the left. This identifies the left actor as Shield Jaguar II. On this date, Shield Jaguar II was 5 years old, and he is portrayed as being considerably shorter than the right actor. It is interesting to note that the last sentence on Lintel 1 ended by saying "mother of Shield Jaguar II" and that the next actor we are introduced to is Shield Jaguar II.

The third sentence of Lintel 2, which begins at K, is visually separated from the second sentence by a border. This third sentence is divided into three blocks of text that frame the right actor. Beginning with a verbal phrase (K–L) that refers to the holding of the cross, the text from M to Q names Bird Jaguar as subject. The reading order of the nominal phrase is M, N, and then O1–O4, P, and Q. This means that in order to read the nominal phrase, the eye is led diagonally across the action of the right actor. The upside-down U shape of the right actor's backrack and the upside-down U shape of the horizontal cross reinforces the movement from N to Q. The reader has been told in the text that Bird Jaguar held the cross, and



Yaxchilan Lintel 2

Figure 16. Yaxchilan Lintel 2 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

the placement of the glyph blocks has led the viewer across to the illustration of Bird Jaguar holding the cross.

The second episode of the Structure 33 narrative begins on Lintel 3, with an image of two actors holding God K manikin scepters (fig. 17). The text is composed of two sentences. The first sentence is divided into three blocks of text that frame the right actor. Paraphrased, it reads: "On 8 Ahau 8 Zotz Bird Jaguar held the scepter." By reading the first sentence, the viewer's eye is taken from block A1–E2 to G1–H2 and finally to I1–J3. Once again, in order to finish reading the nominal phrase of the subject, the viewer's eye is drawn across the body of an actor. The upside-down U shape of the right actor's backrack feathers reinforces the movement from H2 to I1. The placement of the glyph blocks leads the reader across the illustration of Bird Jaguar holding a God K manikin scepter.

The second sentence on Lintel 3 is located at F1–F4. This block of text is composed of only a nominal phrase; it lacks a date and a verb. However, both the date and verb are implied by the context.



Figure 17. Yaxchilan Lintel 3 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

Both actors carry out the same action, apparently simultaneously. The left actor is named as being a three-katun cahal.[6] It is interesting to note that the cahal holds the God K manikin scepter above the text, in the position where the verb would normally be located. The action of the image has, in effect, replaced the verb of the text.

In all of these Structure 33 scenes, Bird Jaguar is emphasized by a number of visual conventions. On Lintel 1, Lady Great Skull's upper text and headdress overlap the feathers of Bird Jaguar's headdress. Although it is not apparent in the drawing, an examination of the actual lintel reveals that her buttocks overlap her lower text at G1–G3, and her headdress overlaps her upper text. These devices place Bird Jaguar on the plane farthest from the viewer and put Lady Great Skull in

the visual forefront of the picture plane. However, Bird Jaguar still holds the commanding role in both the text and image. It is Bird Jaguar's sentence that carries not only the Calendar Round but also the Supplementary Series information. He is named with all of his important titles in an elaborate nominal phrase. Lady Great Skull stands in profile gazing toward Bird Jaguar. Bird Jaguar's body is placed in a frontal pose, and he does not interact with Lady Great Skull. Rather he faces towards the left, where his text lies. Bird Jaguar and his text take up three-quarters of the scene. His headdress feathers intrude into the space of Lady Great Skull.

On Lintel 2, elements from both actors overlap the first and second sentence, and this places both actors on the same plane. Bird Jaguar is turned toward, and interacts with, Shield Jaguar II. However, Bird Jaguar is again the emphasized actor, for Shield Jaguar II stands in profile while Bird Jaguar is portrayed in a frontal stance. Bird Jaguar carries two crosses, and they are both larger than his son's. Bird Jaguar's headdress looms higher than Shield Jaguar II's. Clearly Bird Jaguar is the emphasized actor in the image.

On Lintel 3, the touching hands of the manikin scepters place both actors on the same plane. The emphasized text is that of Bird Jaguar; it carries the Calendar Round, the Supplementary Series, and the lengthy nominal phrase. This nominal phrase frames the illustration of Bird Jaguar. Taken as a whole, the complete sentence spans the entire scene. The cahal is turned in profile, facing Bird Jaguar, while Bird Jaguar stands with his body facing the viewer. Bird Jaguar holds his scepter higher than that of the cahal, and his headdress looms higher as well. Once again, Bird Jaguar and his text occupy most of the space in the scene, and this too places the emphasis on him. This result is accomplished on both a literary level (one text is more elaborate than the other) and on a visual level (elaboration of costume, frontal pose, and the occupation of most of the space).

The appearance of Bird Jaguar's consort and his son in the first episode, and that of his cahal in the final episode, raises questions concerning the subject of this story. The first episode concludes on Lintel 2 with the fifth tun anniversary of Bird Jaguar's accession. It is illustrated as a cross event by Bird Jaguar and his son, Shield Jaguar II. Although this second scene is the fifth anniversary of Bird Jaguar's reign, it is also the first noted event in the life of his five-year-old son, Shield Jaguar. Lounsbury (1980:107) speculated that pre-accession events were related to designation, occupancy, or preparation for future occupancy of royal office. Lintel 2 appears to be such an event for Shield Jaguar II. If this interpretation is correct, the first episode is a statement concerning the first lineage event of Shield Jaguar, and Lintel 1 provides the background for this event. In other words, Bird Jaguar's accession sets the stage for his son's first public ritual. This

may explain why Bird Jaguar's accession is not emphasized in Lintel 1, and why Lady Great Skull is identified, not as the wife of Bird Jaguar, but as the mother of Shield Jaguar.

The final episode concerns Bird Jaguar and a cahal who is named Kin Ah Po Mo. On Lintel 57, Lintel 54, and Stela 7, Lady Great Skull carries a cahal title, suggesting that she is related to cahals or may have come from a cahal lineage. Given the frequently high profile of cahals at Yaxchilan, they were certainly of major importance. It is possible that if Lady Great Skull was the daughter or grand-daughter of Kin Ah Po Mo, then this narrative would commemorate this cahal's link to the ruling dynasty of Yaxchilan through a marriage alliance. However, until we understand the nature of the first lineage event and the function of the cahal, what role Kin Ah Po Mo played in this story must remain speculation.

Yaxchilan Lintel 26

The text on Yaxchilan Lintel 26 begins on its outer edge with an Initial Series date and the statement that Lady Xoc performed an event. Structure 23 of Yaxchilan has three doorways, each with a lintel carved on both the outside edge and underside. From left to right doorway (when facing the building), these are Lintel 24, Lintel 25, and Lintel 26. Regrettably, the outside edge of Lintel 24 was lost even before Maudslay removed this lintel to the British Museum, so it is impossible to be certain that the story did not begin on this lintel. However, the outer edge of Lintel 26 begins with an Initial Series (Graham & von Euw 1977:58)—which, as we have seen, often serves to begin a story. Assuming that the edge of Lintel 24 did not also begin with an Initial Series, a viewer standing in front of this temple would be visually drawn to a starting point on the outer edge of the rightmost lintel.[7]

This text is executed in high relief. The viewer then moves to the underside of the lintel; this scene is composed of an image in high relief of a male actor gesturing towards a secondary female actor (fig. 18). A caption text in the same high relief is found between the actors. It contains no date, but states an event by Shield Jaguar I. A second block of text is found near the leg of the male actor, but is unfortunately eroded. It is possible that it named the female actor. A small low relief text is found in the upper left-hand corner of the lintel. It begins with a Calendar Round date followed by an event and subject. The event has been nicknamed the "*lu* bat" event.

The viewer has the choice of reading either the high relief caption text or the visually less significant low relief text first. What the viewer reads first is vital to the story line, for if the high relief text is read first, then the time frame has not changed from the Initial Series date given on the outer edge. The narrative would be saying that



Yaxchilan Lintel 26

Figure 18. Yaxchilan Lintel 26 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

both Lady Xoc and Shield Jaguar I performed a ritual on the same day. However, if the low relief is read first, then the time frame changes to the new Calendar Round date. I can see no other reason why this text would be executed in low relief except to deemphasize it. I strongly believe that the high relief text would be read first, because the low relief text has been visually "backgrounded."

The Framing Convention: Summary

Some general conclusions can be drawn at this point. First, while the verb of the text may state the general occasion (such as an accession), the action of an actor illustrates one moment in time (such as one aspect of the many rituals involved in the accession ceremony). This means that the verb that states the event in the text is not always the specific action that is illustrated in the image. Second, the image can replace the text, as on Yaxchilan Lintel 3, where the action of the image is placed above the text in the position of the omitted verb of the sentence. Third, the text can also replace the image, as on Naranjo Stela 19 where glyphs replace the hand-scattered drops. In the narrative tradition found in Late Classic Maya art, as Berlo (1983:10) concluded for Mesoamerican art in general, text amplifies image and image amplifies text.

Meanings of Specific Events and Actions

We have come to some preliminary conclusions about the specific events stated in the text and the actions illustrated in the image, but we are still ignorant of the meanings of these actions and their ramifications. The following review of the hand-scattering event will demonstrate some of these problems of interpretation.

Most colonial sources state that blood was drawn from various parts of the body (the most popular were the ear, tongue, and penis) during various rituals. At some point in these Postclassic ceremonies, this blood was offered to idols or smeared on the faces of idols. The cutting of the tongue and subsequent passage of straw through the perforation is documented in Landa as one type of autosacrifice (Tozzer 1941:113). J. E. S. Thompson (1961) noted that bloodletting was illustrated in Classic and Postclassic Maya scenes. Joralemon (1974:59) equated the Postclassic tongue ritual with the scene on Yaxchilan Lintel 17, which illustrates a female pulling a cord through her tongue. A scene on the Dumbarton Oaks Vase shows a male performing the same act. On Yaxchilan Lintel 24, a similar tongue autosacrifice is illustrated (fig. 19). The resulting blood flow from the tongue perforation is found on the actor's cheek. This liquid blood is depicted in the form of scrolls trimmed with drops.



Yaxchilan Lintel 24

Figure 19. Yaxchilan Lintel 24 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

A second form of autosacrifice was penis perforation. Although no Classic sculpture shows the penis itself, Yaxchilan Lintel 17 illustrates the loincloth of the ruler tossed to the side, the legs spread and the ruler posed with a perforator in hand. On a vase illustrated by Joralemon (1974: fig. 12), the actors squat with perforators in hand.

The ruler is illustrated with his hands positioned in front of his groin in several Classic period scenes (figs. 6, 7). Liquid in the form of a scroll trimmed with drops falls from his hands. This action has been called hand-scattering in the scholarly literature, although the illustrated hand gesture does not suggest scattering as much as it does dropping or falling. If the blood scrolls of Lintel 24 were enlarged and placed in vertical position, they would match the liquid found falling from the ruler's hands. This suggests that in both cases the liquid is blood. The position of the hands also suggests that the act is genital bloodletting. D. Stuart (1982, 1988) has made a strong case for this interpretation.[8]

On Yaxchilan Stela 1 (fig. 6), the T710 verb associated with the hand-scattering gesture is a pictograph of a hand making the same scattering gesture. Drops fall from the hand. In other examples of this T710 verb, the drops range in size from several large drops to numerous small drops, but no examples show the liquid scroll (fig. 20a, b). The hand-scattering verb has been read *mal* 'scattering, casting, spilling, sprinkling' by Kelley (1976:51).

The ruler makes the same hand gesture on Piedras Negras Stela 40, but the hand is scattering "drops" rather than a liquid scroll. The T710 hand-scattering verb is associated with this action. If the hand-scattering verb simply means to scatter and does not specify what kind of drops are being scattered, we cannot assume that the action of the ruler hand-scattering liquid is equivalent to the action of the ruler scattering drops. In fact, several authors have argued that the drops are balls of copal incense (Hammond 1982:77–79; Bricker 1986:145; Love 1987).[9]

Tall incense burners give off columns of smoke in the middle scenes of the Dresden New Year pages (fig. 20c). Lounsbury (1973: 107) identified the element in the middle of the smoke as a pictographic sign for the phonetic *pom* 'copal incense' (fig. 20d); this is now a widely accepted reading. In the lower scene on page 25 of the codex (fig. 21a), the deity makes the gesture of hand-scattering towards a similar incense burner, but no drops appear below the hand, and the incense burner does not smoke. In his right hand, the deity clutches a turkey with drops of blood spurting from the headless neck. On page 26 (fig. 21b), the deity scatters drops into what looks like a small incense burner with smoke rising from it. Again the deity clutches a headless turkey, but in this example the neck shows no blood. In the remaining two scenes on pages 27 and 28 (fig. 21c, d),



Figure 20. a. T1.710 hand-scattering verb, Copan Stela B (B7); b. T1.710:93 hand-scattering verb, Quirigua Stela A (B15); c. incense burner, Dresden codex New Year pages; d. T141 *po* sign; e. T93 sign.



Figure 21. a. Dresden New Year, p. 25; b. Dresden New Year, p. 26; c. Dresden New Year, p. 27; d. Dresden New Year, p. 28.

the deity, clutching a turkey in his right hand, scatters drops on a plate of offerings and in front of a deer haunch. Neither of these two turkeys has blood on its neck. The central question is, are these deities performing a single action or two separate actions? In other words, are the deities offering the blood of a freshly beheaded turkey, or are they offering a turkey with one hand and scattering incense with the other?

A ritual that was recorded shortly after the conquest involved the sacrifice of a turkey and the burning of its blood (Tozzer 1913). La Farge and Byers (1931:178) describe a modern Year Bearer ceremony (New Year ceremony) in which a turkey is sacrificed and its blood is burned. During both of these ceremonies increase is burned also. Because both incense and blood are burned, the appearance of a burner in the Dresden scenes cannot be used as solid evidence in favor of incense. On the other hand, the fact that the "drops" are not being



Figure 22. La Pasadita Lintel 2 (drawing after Ian Graham).

La Pasadita Lintel 2

scattered into a burner in the other scenes cannot be used as evidence for blood because the ceremonial role of copal is not limited to burning (large quantities of unburned copal offerings were retrieved from the cenote at Chichen). Unless the undeciphered caption text associated with these images contains direct information about these drops, I do not believe the identity of these drops in the Dresden codex can be firmly resolved from the available evidence.

Bricker (1986:145) and Love (1987) have argued that the T93 sign (fig. 20e), which is sometimes found suffixed to the T710 hand-scattering verb, is qualifying what kinds of drops are being scattered. Bricker suggested that T93 is a pictograph of a copal nodule and should be read as *pom* 'copal incense' (a comparison of figures 20d and 20e illustrates the similarity of Lounsbury's *pom* to T93). Love (1987) reads T93 as *chahalte* (a particular kind of incense).

On La Pasadita Lintel 23 (fig. 22), the first sentence of the narrative is broken into two blocks of text (A1–A9 and B1–B6). This sentence refers to the principal actor who has the liquid blood pouring from his hands. It uses the T710 hand-scattering verb without a T93 suffix. The sentence (C1–C5) that refers to the secondary actor who holds some kind of ball in his hand uses a phrase of the form auxiliary verb + ti + verbal noun, with T93 as part of the verbal noun. Josserand, Schele, and Hopkins (1985) have demonstrated that the verbal noun in these constructions may refer to the object being held by the actor. The T93:603 verbal noun (C2), which should explain what kind of ball this actor is holding, has been read by Bricker (1986:145) as *pom*. If Bricker's reading is correct, this scene shows an actor hand-scattering liquid blood, and a secondary actor about to hand-scatter a large ball of incense into the basket with the blood. Thus both blood and incense appear to be involved in the act of hand-scattering, as is the case in the modern Year Bearer ceremony reported by La Farge and Byers. Using Bricker's reading of T93 as *pom* 'incense' means that the T93 glyph found in the T710 hand-scattering verb is not qualifying what kind of drops are being scattered by the hand. Rather, this pictograph illustrates blood being dropped on incense.

As noted above, Maya New Year ceremonies involved both blood and incense. Freidel (1985) notes the close association between blood and incense: incense is the blood of trees. This association is documented in the *Popol Vuh* where Blood Woman gathers the sap of a tree (incense), which then magically turns to blood (Edmonson 1971:79). Furthermore, the Lords of the Underworld burn this blood/incense and smell its sweet fragrance. Morley (Morley & Brainerd 1956) identified hand-scattering with sowing corn. Several kinds of incense are recorded in the colonial documents, including one mixed with ground maize (Tozzer 1941:140). The Postclassic

New Year ceremony recorded by Landa states that the statue of the deity Uayeyab was censed with a mixture of incense and maize. Several sources say that the flesh and blood of man were made from maize and sacred water, or that man was made from maize mixed with blood. Presenting a link between blood and maize symbolism, Taube (1985) suggested that the drops referred to both corn and blood. It is quite likely that the Maya conceived of all of these life-giving forces (water, maize, incense, and blood) as being somehow equivalent. However, although we can conclude that hand-scattering liquid refers to bloodletting, we are still at a loss to conclude whether the drops illustrated in the hand-scattering images are blood, incense, corn, or a combination of these materials.

Because the text gives both pictographic and phonetic renderings of words, it provides iconographers with specific meanings for symbols. The reverse of this observation is that the image of a ruler hand-scattering greatly enhances our understanding of a pictograph of drops falling from a hand.

Fabrications

It has been noted by a number of scholars that we have no way of knowing how much of the information found in Maya art is historically accurate. It has even been suggested that some events are fabrications for the purpose of political propaganda. We do know that the Classic Maya artists chose to ignore certain historical facts. The prime example is the case of the artist of the Palenque Palace Tablet, who simply omitted the death of the ruler Kan Xul II in his narrative, apparently because Kan Xul II met an untimely and ungraceful end at the hands of the Tonina lords (see chapter 7 for a discussion of Kan Xul II). The conclusion we must draw from this is that, although Maya art can tell us a great deal about elite life in the Classic period, it presents both a sanitized and an idealized view (Clarkson 1983). At present, the question of whether some narratives were outright fabrications must remain unanswered, for we must understand what the artist is telling us before we can decide whether or not he is lying about it.

The Audience

The fact that the image illustrates only one or two events from the story means that viewers had to be literate or had to accompany someone who was literate to appreciate that story fully, and hence to appreciate the purpose of the monument. The peak event of the story is often not what the artist chose to illustrate—a fact that reinforces

this conclusion. It is possible that a guide led an illiterate group through the story, much like the tour guides of today.

Architectural Context of Maya Art

The scenes on Classic Maya stelae, lintels, and wall panels are found in a variety of architectural contexts, as well as in conjunction with other works of art, such as stucco facades and altars. Establishing the interrelationships of these works of arts contributes to our understanding of the narratives. However, few examples of Maya art have survived human greed, intolerance, and ignorance, much less the ravages of time. Hence, we can achieve only a limited understanding of the context of Maya art.

Stelae and altars pose the most difficult problems. These sculptures were most often erected in front of buildings or in the middle of a plaza. Looters generally remove the most accessible pieces first, so the stelae and altars are the first objects to disappear from a site. Furthermore, because they are more exposed, they are subject to casual vandalism, as well as to forces of erosion.

The erosion factor is much higher for stelae and altars than for other, better protected surfaces. Although several wall panels and lintels have been damaged by collapsing buildings, the rubble from these buildings protects them not only from looters, but also from exposure to the elements. When a stela falls, whatever side is exposed is almost always lost to us. If the stelae was carved on two or more sides, we may end up losing over half the narrative. It is nearly impossible to understand the relationship between two stelae when one or both is incomplete. In the same regard, the relationship between the architectural art of the building and the stela that stands before it cannot be understood when one or both is incomplete.[10] Exceptions to these problems of erosion are found at both Copan and Quirigua, where some stelae have remained in relatively good condition and in their original sites.

The attempt to ascertain the contexts in which narratives are found is further complicated by the fact that a great deal of maintenance and renovation occurred in Precolumbian times. This often makes it very difficult to understand the original layout of the art. The stelae at Tikal, which were deposited in garbage dumps or reset in new locations, are prime examples of this problem (Jones & Satterthwaite 1982).

The Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque also demonstrates the problem of ascertaining the original layout of the art works when renovation has occurred. The Temple of the Inscriptions is a nine-tiered pyramid with a multichambered temple on top. In order to en-

Palenque T of I
Piers B - E Stucco

ter the temple, the viewer must walk past, and presumably read, the inscriptions and images found on the stairs, facades, and jambs of the temple—which are all eroded.[11] Four of the stucco piers illustrate an actor holding a God K in the form of a baby.[12] Unfortunately, the caption text identifying these actors has fallen off and been lost. The only piece of evidence for a possible identification exists on Pier D, where the actor wears a headdress similar to one worn in a portrait of the ancestor Chan Bahlum I. Robertson argues that these pier actors are the ancestors of Pacal II (1983:46).

A partial text runs across the top of the piers and Mathews (n.d.c) has argued from a structural standpoint that it could have included the 819-day count of 9.12.16.2.2 1 Ik 10 Zec (20 May, A.D. 688). If so, this is the 819-day count for a series of events that occurred about six years after the ruler Chan Bahlum II's accession.

Three tablets that form a narrative are found inside the temple. This narrative begins by introducing the accessions and Period Ending events of a series of Palenque rulers from Chaacal I (c. A.D. 465) to Pacal II (c. A.D. 615). After focusing on various events in the life of Pacal II and his wife, the narrative ends with his death and the accession of the next ruler, Chan Bahlum II on 10 January, A.D. 684. Although it is not stated in the surviving text on the Temple of the Inscriptions, Chan Bahlum II was the son of Pacal II (Schele, Mathews & Lounsbury 1977; Schele 1978).

Under the floor of the left room of the temple, Ruz discovered the top of an interior staircase filled with rubble (Ruz Lhuillier 1958). The excavation of this staircase led down into the bowels of the pyramid. In the original construction sequence, the staircase ended at right angles to a door. This door led into a vaulted room that was constructed on a north-south axis, 5 ft below plaza level. Inside the room, the stone coffin of the ruler Pacal II takes up most of the space. An elevated platform extends out from the north wall. The north, east, and west walls are decorated with life-sized stucco figures set into niches.

The rectangular coffin box or sarcophagus was quarried from one solid block of limestone (7.2 ft wide × 12.43 ft long × 3.8 ft deep). The interior of this limestone block was hollowed out in a keyhole shape just large enough to accommodate a body (Ruz Lhuillier 1973: fig. 205). A channel or lip runs around the inside perimeter of the keyhole shape to allow for a lid to be placed flush with the top surface of the box (Ruz Lhuillier 1973: fig. 202). The sides of the box are carved with a series of portraits of Pacal II's direct ancestors (Robertson 1983: fig. 177). The box rests on six legs; the corner legs are carved with illustrations of unidentified actors and undeciphered text. A second lid made from a single slab of limestone covered the top of the box. This lid is carved on the top with the

famous scene of Pacal II falling into the jaws of a monster (fig. 23), and on the sides with a main text that gives the death dates for Pacal II and his ancestors (see table 1).

Unlike many Late Classic buildings, which were built on top of earlier structures, the Temple of the Inscriptions was constructed on a vacant location in a single phase of building. Because the coffin is wider than the arch of the doorway, the room and pyramid must have been built around the box.[13] The construction sequence of the structure began with the building of the tomb room. As the tiers of the pyramid were added around and above the tomb, so were the vault and stairs of the interior staircase. It is apparent from several architectural features that modifications occurred in the design of the tomb and interior stairs before they were finally sealed. In the original design, the interior staircase terminated at the floor level of the tomb (Ruz Lhuillier 1973: fig. 152). When a viewer entered the tomb through this doorway, there was enough space around the coffin to walk the perimeter of the box and read the inscription found on the edge of the lid. At this point, the inscription would have been slightly below the eye level of an average Classic Maya male. Indeed, the only way that the stucco figures found in the wall niches could have been seen is if the viewer walked around the box and stood directly in front of these spaces.

At some point after the wall stuccos were complete, the Maya filled in the bottom of the staircase outside the tomb room. This fill rises to a level just below the arch of the tomb vault. This eliminated the original doorway but left a small triangular opening into the tomb that was shaped by the arch of the room vault. This new doorway is at the ceiling level of the tomb room and is used as the doorway into the tomb today. Inside the room, the Maya filled the entrance and the area in front of the box to a level just below the lid and laid a new "floor" (Ruz Lhuillier 1973: fig. 180). From this new floor, they constructed a small staircase up to the new doorway.

The Maya infilled the space that separated the west and east walls from the box. The space between the north platform and the box was also infilled. The fill completely obscured the illustrations on the sides of the box, and made the wall stuccos difficult to see. Although a viewer could still walk partially around on this new floor, the main inscription around the coffin lid was now near floor level. For reading the main inscription or viewing the stuccos, the modification changed the entire design of the tomb. Still, access to the tomb was maintained.

Moises Morales (pers. comm. 1986) has argued for many years that the reason for the modification is found in the crack on the north side of the coffin box. Morales suggested that the Maya feared this crack would eventually split open and that they buttressed the sides

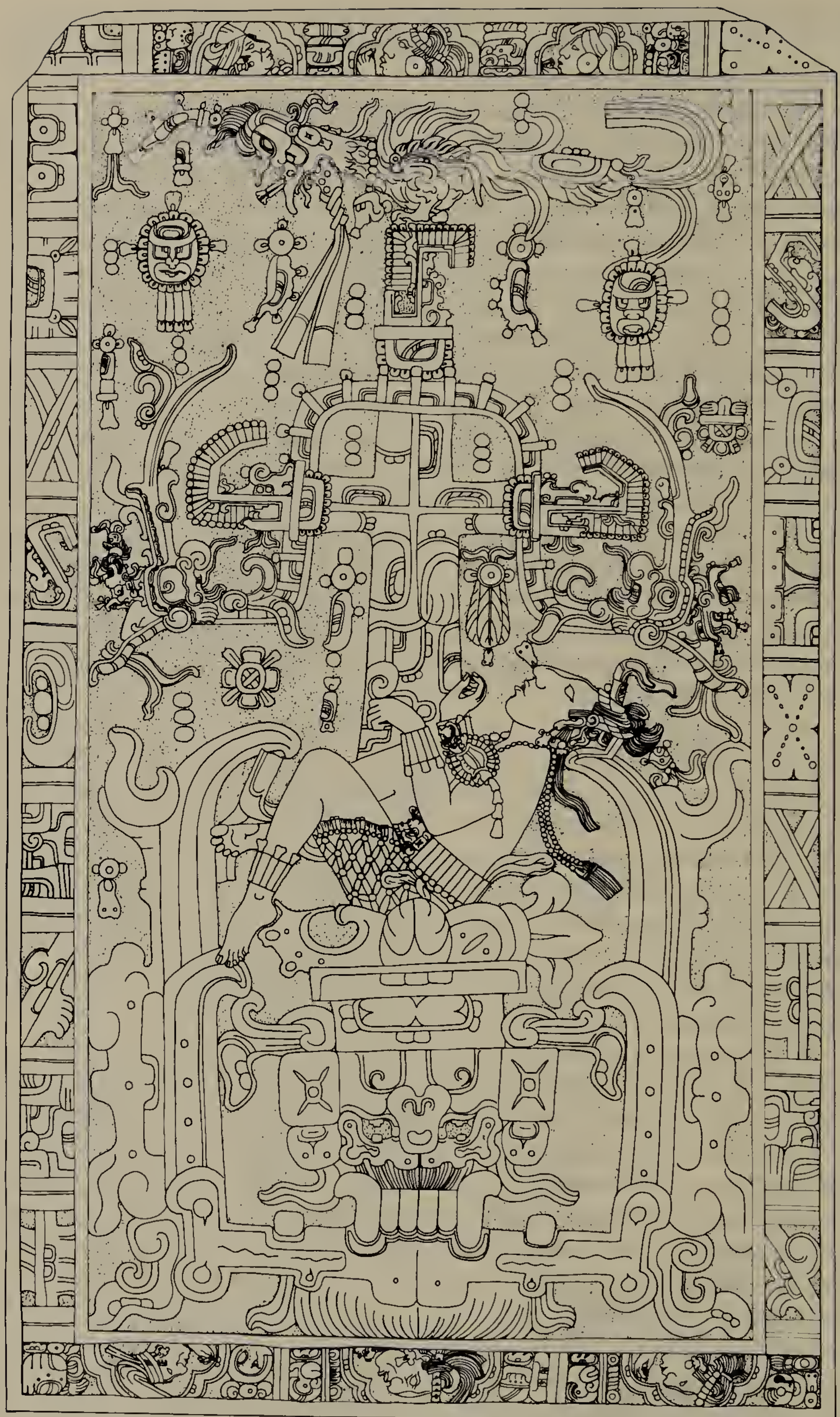


Figure 23. Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus Lid (drawing courtesy Merle Greene Robertson).

of the box with infill to prevent this. Given the nature of limestone to fracture along cracklines, his argument appears to be sound.

The uniqueness of the interior staircase has led to much speculation about the nature of this temple. Several scholars believe that the Temple of the Inscriptions was designed and built by Pacal II as his own funerary monument (Ruz Lhuillier 1973; Schele 1974a; Robertson 1983). In their interpretation, the purpose of the interior staircase was to allow interment of the body. Ruz suggested that the top lid originally rested on the north platform before the interment and was subsequently rolled over the box after the body was placed inside.

If the Temple of the Inscriptions was built by Pacal II, then the appearance of Chan Bahlum II in the temple narrative implies at the very least that this building was either completed by Chan Bahlum II or later modified by him. I do not oppose the argument that Pacal II designed his own tomb, but if he initiated the construction, it represents a major innovation in the Maya culture. There is no evidence from any other site that rulers built their own funerary monuments. A typical Late Classic burial for a ruler of Pacal II's stature would consist of placing the body on a floor or platform and building a vaulted room around it. In the case of the burial in Tikal Temple I, a pyramid would then be constructed on top of the tomb.

Enough evidence exists to suggest that it is at least a possibility that the Temple of the Inscriptions was initiated and constructed by Chan Bahlum II. A plausible scenario would be that at the death of Pacal II, the Palencanos quickly quarried and hollowed a box of stone. Once the body was sealed inside the box with the first lid, the construction of the corbel-arched vault around the box could proceed in the usual manner of a Classic period burial. The carving of the box and the lid could proceed simultaneously with the construction of the pyramid, as well as the tomb stuccos. In this scenario, the innovative aspect of the design would be not that a ruler built his own funerary monument, but that his successor desired access to the tomb after interment, perhaps for the purpose of veneration.[14] Whether the tomb was intended to be left open for a short period of time or for an extended period is open to speculation, but the fact remains that the tomb was designed to be viewed by people.

The Temple of the Inscriptions is a single, integrated composition. The viewer climbs the pyramid and passes the piers of the temple, which presumably illustrate Pacal II's ancestors and might make reference to Chan Bahlum II in the pier text. Inside the temple, the narrative gives the accessions and Period Ending events for Pacal II and his ancestors, as well as important events in Pacal II's life. It ends with Pacal II's death and the accession of Chan Bahlum II. Finally, moving down into the tomb, the viewer reads the narrative that begins with the death of Pacal II's ancestors. These subjects have

already been introduced in the temple tablets above. Little background information is needed, and indeed this text is extremely brief. The story climaxes with the death of Pacal II as the viewer stands before Pacal II's coffin, facing his image on the lid.

If this tomb was the scene of veneration ceremonies, then the platform on the north side of the coffin would be a logical location for the rituals of such an event. This platform can be compared with the scene in Bonampak Room 1, where the family carries out its bloodletting rituals.

If the Temple of the Inscriptions was initiated by Pacal II but finished by his successor, Chan Bahlum II, then a case can be made that the appearance of Chan Bahlum II in the narrative is a modification of the monument. However, if Chan Bahlum II was the initiator of the building, then a case can be made that he was venerating his father and predecessor, and by extension reinforcing his own position. In this case, his appearance in the narrative is not at all intrusive.

This discussion demonstrates that the questions concerning original design, modification, initiation of construction, and even motivation of the construction are still very much open to discussion. These questions arise for most of Maya art, not just for the Temple of the Inscriptions.

Conclusion

Ongoing decipherment of hieroglyphic texts has led to better "readings" of certain glyphs, but by and large our understanding of the content of the narrative in Maya art still remains limited. As this brief overview of Late Classic monumental sculpture demonstrates, often it is not even clear who erected monuments and what was their original purpose. In the following chapters, I will attempt to clarify the questions touched on here, of where the events/actions of the narrative are taking place, what the nature of the events/actions was, and the reasons why they were performed in those particular locations.



3
The Cave

Heaven and earth trembled, and the wild bees buzzed at the wells and the caves before the wooden idols placed there by the Itza.
—*The Book of Chilam Balam of Mani*

The importance of caves in Precolumbian Mesoamerican culture has been discussed by several scholars (Grove 1973; Heyden 1975; Schavelzon 1980). Numerous kinds of historical activities occurred at caves.

The rites associated with caves were initiations related to social incorporation, such as baptisms or the entrance to adolescence or adulthood, and sociopolitical ceremonies, such as investitures and ascensions (Heyden 1975). Other rites involving exorcism and the cure of illness were also carried out in caves. As well, many mythological events were thought to have occurred at caves. A cave was the location of the birth of gods and races. The sun and moon were said to be born from a cave (Heyden 1975:134; Schavelzon 1980:159). The Aztec believed they originated from Chicomostoc (Seven Caves). A womb/vagina is represented in many Mesoamerican birth metaphors by a cave (Heyden 1975; Brady 1988:52).

The importance of caves during the Classic period in the Maya region can also be demonstrated. In this chapter, I will establish that certain signs and symbols in Maya art represent the personification of specific caves and cave tunnels, and that many of the rituals illustrated in Classic Maya art, including the Period Ending events and accession events, were performed at cave locations.

Maya Caves and Cave Rituals

The Yucatan Peninsula is predominantly a limestone shelf that is honeycombed with cave systems. Evidence for Precolumbian ritual activity at these caves is documented by widespread archaeological remains (E. H. Thompson 1898; Mercer 1896; Seler 1901; La Farge 1947; Andrews 1970; Pendergast 1970; J. E. S. Thompson 1975; Macleod & Puleston 1978; Pohl & Pohl 1983; G. Stuart 1981; Brady & Stone 1986, to name only a few). Readers are referred to J. E. S. Thompson (1975) for a lengthy overview of Maya caves. Pohl and Pohl (1983) noted that Precolumbian ritual paraphernalia, from stingray spines to copal incense, has been found inside caves. They suggested that the Classic Maya elite performed rituals at cave locations on such occasions as accession. The dramatic discovery of the Naj Tunich cave with its wall paintings and ritual remains led Brady and Stone (1986) to suggest that this cave specifically was used by elite members of Classic Maya society.

Numerous architectural modifications occur in caves, including walls, platforms, altars, and staircases. Even small houses within caves have been discovered. In some instances, a cave or an entrance into other parts of a cave has been sealed with a wall.

The Persistence of Cave Rituals

The literature of the contact period makes reference to Postclassic cave rituals (Tozzer 1941:76, 182; Roys 1933:174). Las Casas noted that the idols were taken to caves and offered sacrifices of birds, incense, pine, and ground cacao (Thompson 1975:xxviii). A quotation from Juan de Villagutierre Soto-Mayor's seventeenth-century account of the Peten Itzas documents ritual cave activity:

> Not all the infidels who wanted to worship entered these sanctuaries (the temples of the town); rather, they held their idolatries in *cavernas* as they call them, in the forests, hills and caves. (Comparato 1983:316)

The Yucatan inquisition of the sixteenth century is alleged to have begun because of the continuation of cave rituals, when "one Pedro Che, a *portero* of the convent in Mani, while out hunting, discovered a cave in which he smelt incense and, on going farther into the cave, found altars, many idols and the blood of sacrificed deer" (Tozzer 1941:76). During the seventeenth century, cave rituals persisted despite the Maya's conversion to Christianity. In both Chiapas and Guatemala, cave idols with recent offerings of incense, candles, food, and money were discovered by Christian clergy. The sacrifice of children to a spring inside a cave near Mixco Viejo was reported in 1680 (Thompson 1975:xxvii).

The endurance of Precolumbian cave rituals was found at the Kanjobal town of Santa Eulalia in 1932. La Farge (1947:128) discovered that on the occasion of the Year Bearer ceremony (a New Year ritual based on the Precolumbian calendar), the priest/shaman performed prayers and divinations at a cave called the Yalan Na'. The cave, which contained a collection of ancient idols, an altar, and a cross, was thought to be the home of the ancestral couple. Blom and La Farge (1927) noted the occurrence of sacred caves with ritual remains in almost all the areas of Chiapas they visited. Oakes was informed of a cave ritual in the Mam region in the late 1940s:

> On New Year's day [the Christian New Year], when the prayermakers come into office, they carry it [a sacred symbol] in a procession encircling the mountains that surround the pueblo. One of my mayores when he was drunk one time told me that when the procession visited the different places of worship it took a day and a night. They passed at night when it was quite dark into a huge cave in the mountains, and within were large stone idols. Only the chief Prayermaker and the head priest know the secret of the whereabouts of this cave. (Oakes 1951a:7)

In 1960, seventeen wooden idols of modern manufacture were discovered in a cave on the sacred mountain of the Tzotzil community of Chalchihuitan (Holland 1962:158). An entry in the Aulie and Aulie Chol dictionary under *ch'en* 'cave' is "*Hay una cueva en Jolonel donde nuestros antepasados entraron a adorar a sus dioses*" (Aulie & Aulie 1978) ("there is a cave in Jolonel where our ancestors entered to adore their gods"). Jolonel (Joloniel) is a town in the Chol district of Tumbala, and cave rituals are still performed there.

In the mythology that exists throughout the Maya area, it is thought that the gods of rain, winds, thunder, lightning, rainbows, clouds, and corn live in caves, and that these natural elements are actually created in caves (Redfield & Villa Rojas 1934:165, 207, 333; J. E. S. Thompson 1950:238, 1970:267, 269, 273; Guiteras-Holmes 1961:153, 231, 234, 281; Hermitte 1964:49; Whittaker & Warkentin 1965:135; Vogt 1969:302, 387). In the highlands, the cave is often described, not as dark and damp, but as a place very much like the real world. The deity of the cave has a house and abundant possessions. The cave opening acts as a doorway to this place. It is a portal of transition between the real and invisible world.

The modern Maya go to caves to petition the gods, as well as the ancestors who are also thought to live there (Sapper 1897; Hermitte 1964; Vogt 1969:387; Nash 1970; J. E. S. Thompson 1950:175, 1970:268; MacLeod & Puleston 1978:73). For example, the Kekchi Maya of Alta Verapaz perform rituals at the cave of the rain and thunder deity (Sapper 1897:282; Gurnee 1968). On the Day of the Cross, the

Tzotzil Maya go into deep caves and erect crosses. They burn incense and say prayers for rain. Until very recently, the curers of the Tzeltal town of Amatenango del Valle entered the sacred cave of the ancestors on this day to ask them for rain and good crops (Nash 1970:23). In the Chol area of Salto de Agua, petitioners perform crop and hunting rituals at the nearby mountain cave of Lah Tat Don Juan 'Our Father Don Juan' (Cruz Guzman et al. 1980:116). James Brady (pers. comm. 1989) reported that once the Kekchi Indians from the surrounding area learned of the existence of Naj Tunich cave, they began making pilgrimages to the site before the rainy season in order to perform crop rituals. They are convinced that the corn god lives there.

The specific acts carried out in the modern cave ceremonies include the reciting of prayers to the ancestors and supernatural owner of the cave; offerings of foodstuffs, money, pottery, and candles; burning of incense; and playing of musical instruments, dancing, and divinations.

Caves in Maya Mythology

The extensive cave systems of the Maya area were produced by the erosion of underground streams or rivers. The strong association between caves and water is found in the Maya myth that even a dry cave has water behind its walls (Redfield & Villa Rojas 1934:165). The word most commonly used in most Mayan languages for cave is *ch'e'en* (or its cognates). A well or cistern is also referred to as a *ch'e'en,* reflecting the widespread association between water and caves. In the Tzotzil community of Zinacantan, Vogt (1969:387) noted that "waterholes," "limestone sinks," and "caves" are classified together as *ch'enetik* where one prays to the supernatural owner of the cave so he will provide rain and the crops will grow.

Guiteras-Holmes (1961:153, 281) recorded the information that the *wits* 'mountain' is the home of the rain god and that the cave is the doorway to the rain god's abode. The direct relationship between mountains and caves is further documented in the word *ch'e'en* 'cave', for it also carries the meaning of a large rock or peak.

A vertical cave opening is formed when the roof of a cave tunnel or cavern collapses. These limestone sinks frequently lead down to the water table and form natural wells that are called *cenotes* (from Yucatec Maya *dzonot*). J. E. S. Thompson (1975:x) noted that there is no clear distinction between a covered cenote and a cave.

The debris from the fallen roof of a cave frequently creates a mound on the floor of the cave. These mounds often have trees and vegetation growing from them. As well, the mouth of the cave usually has trees growing around its edge, while the roots of the trees and other vines hang down into the cave opening, even stretching

to the floor of the cave. Occasionally, the only means of gaining initial entry into a vertical cave opening is to climb down the tree roots and vines.

In the Tzotzil area, a sacred tree is often found in the vicinity of ritual caves (Vogt 1969:388). Robertson noted that the modern Chol believe a ceiba tree growing from the mouth of a cave is sacred, and they perform rituals at such locations (1983:59). J. E. S. Thompson (1970:195) noted the existence of the belief that the ancestors came through the roots of the ceiba tree. There is a pan-Mesoamerican belief that lineages came from caves; this myth suggests that "in the beginning" the ancestors climbed the roots of a ceiba tree growing from the mouth of a cave, and entered the world.

Many authors have observed that the modern crosses found at various locations are non-Christian in nature and are associated with non-Christian rites (La Farge & Byers 1931:185; Oakes 1951a, Guiteras-Holmes 1961; Vogt 1969). The cross in these areas is not associated with the crucifix but is identified as a tree.

The tree-cross of the Chorti house compound has a hole in front of it that is used for ritual offerings. The hole is called a cave (John Fought, pers. comm. 1989). The Tzotzil erect crosses that represent trees at the mouth of caves, as well as inside (Vogt 1969:388). On the Day of the Cross, which is associated with the coming of the rains, they perform their first crop ritual to the rain god at these crosses (Guiteras-Holmes 1961:33; Holland 1962:130; J. E. S. Thompson 1970:267). Villa Rojas (1947:580) noted:

> In the municipio of Oxchuc, best known to the writer, each rural settlement is tied by religious bonds to a certain cave where a cross is kept as the main symbol of its sacred importance. Usually the rancheria is known by the name of the cave to which it belongs; thus the rancheria of Dzajalchen (Red Cave) is connected with the cave of that name. In addition to this main cave there are others of less importance, but also treated with respect and sanctified through one or more crosses. This mystic devotion to caves has its origin in the belief that it is from them that lightning comes to punish and to disperse the natural elements (hail, winds, storms) which frequently threaten and even destroy corn fields.

It is likely that the modern tree-crosses represent a sacred tree growing from the rain god's cave.

The rain god's association with trees, and specifically with the yaxche, is found in the surviving rain ceremony of Yucatan called the Cha Chac (E. H. Thompson 1932:54–62), in which a yaxche deep in the forest is the location of the ritual. In this ceremony, a four-post

platform bound with vines was constructed under a yaxche (E. H. Thompson 1932:54–62). A young boy was tied to each corner, with a fifth boy in the center. The platform was filled with offerings of food. The tree was stripped of all of its vines except those on the east side. (In Yucatan, it is said that the rain comes from the east.) At the commencement of the ceremony, a participant called the "Bringer of Winds" pulled on the remaining vines, thus creating a rattling sound "like the rushing and swirling of great winds." Another participant called the "Keeper of Lightning" clashed together wood sticks to imitate the sound of thunder, and the boys began to croak like frogs or toads. E. H. Thompson (1932:278) stated his belief that all traditions have a basis in fact and can be explained by a sufficiently close observation of the natural conditions. Just before a rainfall in Yucatan, frogs and toads begin to croak, the wind rises, and thunder fills the air. The sympathetic magic of the Cha Chac ceremony, in which like produces like, is intended to result in the coming of the rain.[1] The specific location of the Cha Chac ceremony of the village of Telachaquillo is a cenote (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:261).

Mercer (1896) observed that the cool wind, blowing from the mouth of the cave, stirs the trees of the cave. The notion that winds were created in caves may have been based on a similar observation. The belief that clouds were created in caves might also have been based on observation. To explain his informant's insistence that clouds came out of caves, Vogt (1969:387) noted that visually the rain clouds appear to form, not in the air, but on the slopes and tops of mountains.

Brady (pers. comm. 1989) observed that the incense from the Naj Tunich ceremony literally billowed out of the cave opening like a cloud. The fact that the Maya believe that clouds are formed in caves suggests that the Maya cave ceremony might have been imitating a natural observation in an attempt to "create" rain. In the Tzotzil area, smoke was said to turn into clouds of rain (Guiteras-Holmes 1961: 153; J. E. S. Thompson 1970:267).

Role of Stalagmites in Cave Ritual

The focus of the Naj Tunich ceremony is a stalagmite column (James Brady, pers. comm. 1989). When water drips from the roof of a limestone cave, it carries with it dissolved calcium carbonate from the limestone. The constant dripping and evaporation of this water result in the deposits that are called stalactites (when they hang from the roof) and stalagmites (when they are found on the floor). The caves of the Maya area invariably contain these dramatic drip-water stones. These formations are called *xix ha tunich* 'drip-water stone' in Yucatec (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:946) (the commonest word for

stone in Maya languages is *tun*). Another term for stalagmite is *yach kak*. *Yach* means "its penis." Justeson and Mathews (1983:587) noted that there is a persistent lexical association of the meanings "stone" and "penis" in Mayan languages. The visual association between a stalagmite and an erect penis is obvious.

The notion that the stalagmite is an important component of the cave is reflected in some of the terms used to describe caves, such as the Kekchi *naj tunich,* which means "house of the stone." Although these phrases are often translated as "stone house," Nicholas Hopkins (pers. comm. 1989) noted that these phrases are compound noun formations. In Mayan languages, the two common patterns of compound noun formation are adjective-noun or noun-noun. The latter are modeled on the syntax of the possessive noun phrase, where the first noun is the possessed object and the second noun is the possessor. In the compound noun phrase *naj tunich, naj* must indicate the possessed object. Therefore, the correct translation of *naj tunich* must be "house of the stone."[2] I suggest that the "stone" in these cases is a direct reference to the stone stalagmite.[3]

A quotation from La Farge and Byers (1931:243) actually refers to a stalagmite cave as "the house of the stone":

> The second was a large limestone cave, with some stalactites and stalagmites, damp, not a place one would choose to live in. It is called *na'-tcen*. [*tcen* is the Kanjobalan form for "stone"][4]

In the community of Zinacantan, the cave on the sacred mountain on which the Maya pray for rain is called *Ch'ul Ton* 'Divine Stone' (Vogt 1969:379).

Mercer (1896) noted the presence of Precolumbian water vessels near stalagmites in the inner recesses of numerous caves. Many of these vessels were positioned to collect water. J. E. S. Thompson (1975:xx) argued that the stalagmite was a source of *zuhuy ha* 'uncontaminated or virgin water,' and that these vessels were so placed to collect *zuhuy* water to be used in various Maya ceremonies. Visually, the wet drip-water columns do appear to produce water. I suggest that the water that "rains" from the roof of the cave and forms stalactites and stalagmites is a logical source for the Maya belief that rain is created in caves.

Archaeological evidence of Maya rituals involving the stalagmite itself is found in many sources. Maler (1901–3:II:159) described a carved stalactite column in front of Yaxchilan Structure 33:

> This column . . . has little vertical rows of glyphs incised in its depressions . . . I have found similar stalactite columns in front of other structures, which leads to the supposition that there must be an exten-

> sive stalactite cave near Yaxchilan from which the ancients procured their columns. This cave, probably concealed in the neighboring mountain range, is at present wholly unknown. It would be interesting to find it at some future time.

J. E. S. Thompson (1975: xvi, xviii) documented ritual activity in association with stalagmites deep in a cave near Benque Viejo:

> The floor of this chamber was covered with stalagmites of all sizes, and some of these, joining with stalactites which hung from the roof, formed great round columns reaching from the floor to ceiling. . . . The floor was carpeted with a layer of potsherds several inches thick, which must have represented many hundreds of vessels.

G. Stuart (1981:230) recorded painted texts on stalagmites in Naj Tunich cave. Gordon (1898) and Pendergast (1970) both commented on finding carved stalagmites in association with ritual remains in caves. In an inner cavern of Petroglyph Cave in Belize, MacLeod and Puleston (1978:74) noted the placement of a 1.5 m stalagmite in association with numerous postholes and broken pottery. This means that the Classic Maya were "erecting" stalagmites inside caves and performing ceremonies at these locations.

A reason why the Maya would "erect" a stalagmite may be found in a Mesoamerican belief concerning the creation of rain. In discussing the womb/vagina aspect of the cave, Brady (1988:53) noted that "the Tlaloque in Aztez myth carried a phallic staff called *chicahuaztli* which they pounded on the ground to produce rain. As the Tlaloque reside in caves, the production of rain is a result of the symbolic sexual act between the earth's cave/womb/vagina and the phallic *chicahuaztli*." The Tzotzil word *ch'en* 'cave' is used to describe a woman's vagina (Laughlin 1975:132). As noted above, the stalagmite of the cave can be referred to as "its penis." These observations suggest that rain, which was thought to be created in caves, was produced by the symbolic sexual act between the stalagmite/penis and the cave/vagina/womb.

The procreational theme of the cave is reflected in birth metaphors where the cave is a symbolic womb/vagina (Brady 1988). In the *Ritual of the Bacabs,* which gives a series of incantations regarding the cure of certain diseases, Roys (1965:xi) noted that diseases were thought to be semipersonified beings. In order to gain control over the disease, the shaman recounts the parentage of the disease, its conception, and its birth. The birth location of the semipersonified diseases is a cave, as the following quotation demonstrates. These incantations are generally made in quadruplet form, with each part associated with one of the directions. This poetic form functions like a couplet by repeating information about the same event (see chapter 1),

but in a slightly different manner. The first three parts of this particular incantation refer to yaxches in the east, north, and south (I have deleted the portions of the incantation that do not refer to location):

So where came you, when you came?
    In the heart of the *yaxche*-tree, in the heart of the east . . .
Where came you, when you came?
    In the heart of the *yaxche*-tree, in the heart of the north . . .
Where came you, when you came?
    In the heart of the *yaxche*-tree, in the heart of the south . . .

The part of the incantation that refers to the west expands on the description of the location:

Where came you, when you came?
    From the heart of Metnal [the Underworld], from the heart
    of the water,
Where came you forth?
    From the mouth of the dark cave. (Roys 1965:67–68)

Winds in many Maya myths are said to originate in caves and to bring diseases (Redfield & Villa Rojas 1934). Wind is also said to come from water (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:270). Thus, the Maya had a concept of semipersonified diseases originating in the water of the womb/cave, with the wind rising from the water of the cave and carrying the diseases out into the world.

In this particular case, the procreation is malevolent, but the winds could also be beneficial. For example, the Maya prayed for winds in order to fan the flames during the burning of the milpa (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:272).

An association between trees and stalagmites is found in the *Ritual of the Bacabs,* where there is a pairing of an *acantun* and an *acante* at the cave of the semipersonified diseases (Roys 1965:xiv–xv). Roys (1965:xiv, 114) translated *acantun* as "stone set up on a foundation." Schele and D. Stuart (1986:2) noted that these terms appear to be a combination of *ak-a'an,* the past participle of the verb *ak* 'to stand upright', combined with *tun* or *te*. Hence, there is an *acantun* 'set-up stone' and *acante* 'set-up tree' at this cave.

Acan can also carry the meaning "to thunder" (Taube 1988; Barrera Vásquez 1980:5), a meaning that associates this "stone" and "tree" with Chac, for he is the god of thunder. A passage from the incantations also associates the *acantun* and the *acante* with rain and, therefore, with Chac:

> At one time there was the acantun, the acante, a great splotch of blood behind the acantun-acante. One time there was a great rainstorm, a great whirlwind with rain. (Roys 1965:31)

It is said that all whirlwinds issue forth from wet caves (Redfield & Villa Rojas 1934:165). Thus, it is likely that the *acantun* was a stalagmite and the *acante* was a tree associated with the rain god.

Roys (1965:xv) noted that in the *Ritual of the Bacabs* the origin of the semipersonified diseases is referred to as the male 'lust of creation' (*ch'ab*) and the female 'lust of darkness' (*akab*). He equates the *akab* with a womb (Roys 1965:32). The male *ch'ab* is associated with "father" and "begetting." In several incantations the *acantun* substitutes for *ch'ab*. I suggest that this may reflect the "penis" meaning of stalagmite.

The procreational theme of the cave is further reflected in the association between maize and caves. In the *Popol Vuh,* the creator couple receive corn and water from the mountain cave to produce the flesh and blood of man (Edmonson 1971:146; D. Tedlock 1985:163). Edmonson (1971:146) lists a number of Quiche, Kekchi, Mam, Chorti, and Cakchiquel myths that state that corn was originally hidden in a mountain. The implication appears to be that corn was found sealed inside a cave. The stalagmites of the cave are also associated with corn. J. E. S. Thompson (1970:351) noted that the rock beneath which the original maize lay hidden was split open by a thunderbolt thrown by the rain god. The rock was called *chac ye tun* 'great pointed stone', *ocontun* 'stone pillar', and *zuhuy tun* 'uncontaminated stone'—terms that strongly support an identification of this rock as a stalagmite.

The mother of the semipersonified diseases is named as the moon goddess Ix Chel in the *Ritual of the Bacabs* (Roys 1965:4; J. E. S. Thompson 1939). The moon goddess was the patron of childbirth, and in that role she is strongly associated with the birth metaphor of the cave/womb. The name *Ix Chel* 'Lady Rainbow' further associates the moon goddess with the cave, for the Maya believe that rainbows issue forth from caves (Redfield & Villa Rojas 1934:207; Guiteras-Holmes 1961:231; W. F. Morris, pers. comm.).[5] Direct evidence for an association of the moon goddess with the cave is found in the expression in the Motul dictionary for the waning moon, when it is about to disappear. This is called "the departure of the moon to her cave" (*benel u tu ch'e'en*). Another incantation from the *Ritual of the Bacabs* calls the cave "the heart of the water" (Roys 1965:68). Maya mythology associates the moon goddess with bodies of water, and various bodies of water are said to be her home (J. E. S. Thompson 1939, 1950:238).

The moon has an intimate relationship with the rain god. Guiteras-Holmes (1961:35) recorded that in Maya society planting was done according to the phases of the moon and in conjunction with rituals honoring the rain god. It was thought that changes of the moon's phases brought rain (J. E. S. Thompson 1934:145). The *Book of*

Chilam Balam of Tizimin says that the Bacab shakes the tree (brings the rain) and the moon germinates the plants (Makemson 1951:41).

The Cave as the Gateway to the Supernatural World

The world is described by the modern Maya as a square, with the sky above and the Underworld below (Hermitte 1964:44; Vogt 1969). MacLeod and Puleston (1978) have argued convincingly that caves were thought to be the entrance to and exit from the Underworld. In other words, they are the portals between the real and invisible world. This is demonstrated in a Tzotzil story from San Pedro Chenalho (Guiteras-Holmes 1961:258). In this legend, the Earth Lord magically transports a living man to *Katibak* (the Tzotzil place of afterlife) (Guiteras-Holmes 1961:258). This magical transfer from the real to the invisible world occurs near a cave.

In a widespread Mesoamerican myth, which is also found in the *Popol Vuh,* it is said that in order to reach the Underworld a river must be crossed. The caves of the Maya area often end in an impassible underground river or pool of water.

In Chol mythology, it is said that it is night when the sun returns to his home and goes inside his house (Kathryn Josserand, pers. comm. 1987). In the Tzotzil area, when the sun sets, it is said that the sun has gone to visit his father in the Underworld (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:304). The notion that the sun enters the Underworld at sunset is reflected in the Yucatec expression for sunset, *ocol kin* 'the sun is entering,' and in the Manche Chol phrase, *u yochib kin* 'the entrance of the sun' (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:48). Another term used to refer to the setting of the sun and the moon is the Yucatec *t'ubul* 'to sink or be submerged in water or a hollow object' (Barrera Vasquez et al. 1980:843). This is an apt expression if the sun (or moon) is conceived of as setting into a cave or a cave with water. Villa Rojas (1947:156) noted in reference to the Maya of Quintana Roo: "The explanation given for the setting of the sun and the moon is that when they arrive in the west, they enter a subterranean passage through which they pass to the point from which they started."

There is evidence of cave worship associated with the sun in the *Popol Vuh*. But before proceeding with a discussion of these cave rituals, I will digress for a moment to give a brief overview of the saga of the hero twins recorded in this unique colonial document.

The *Popol Vuh* episodes that concern this discussion begin with the adventures of twin brothers called Hunahpu and Xbalanque. After relating a series of escapades involving the twins, the story backs up in time and tells of their father, One Hunahpu, and of the twins' creation. In these episodes, the ancestral father and mother beget two sons, One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu. They grow up and become accomplished ballplayers at their ballcourt in the east. The

noise from their ballgame annoys the Lords of the Underworld, who send for the brothers. The brothers are forced to undertake a series of tasks, which they fail to perform adequately, and they are then sacrificed by the Underworld Lords.

Seven Hunahpu and the headless body of One Hunahpu are buried at the western ballcourt of the Lords of the Underworld. However, the decapitated head of One Hunahpu is placed in a tree, which then bears fruit that is similar in shape to human heads. Blood Woman, the daughter of one of the Lords of the Underworld, comes to the tree, and One Hunahpu's head spits in her hand, which magically impregnates her. Blood Woman escapes the Underworld and goes to live at the household of One Hunahpu. She bears the twins called Hunahpu and Xbalanque who grow up and also become ballplayers. Again the noise of the ballgame disturbs the Lords of the Underworld. The twins follow their father's and uncle's journey into the Underworld. However, after many ordeals they defeat the Lords of the Underworld. The twins try to revive their father and uncle, but fail. The twins then "walked into the sky. And one is the sun, and the other of them is the moon" (Edmonson 1971:144). Because Hunahpu is always named in the text before his brother Xbalanque, Hunahpu has been identified as the sun and Xbalanque as the moon. The identification of the twins and the other actors in the *Popol Vuh* is discussed in chapter 6.

When the hero twins leave the western ballcourt of the Underworld and enter the sky as the sun and moon, they are emerging from the cave. Indeed, the *Popol Vuh* states that Blood Woman left the Underworld through "a hole in the earth," which suggests that she escaped through a cave (Edmonson 1971:80). This emergence of the sun and moon is naturally associated with the pan-Mesoamerican birth metaphor of the cave and is reminiscent of the Central Mexican belief that the sun and the moon were born from a cave.

When One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu cannot be revived by the twins, their bodies are left in the Underworld at the western ballcourt. However, the twins make them two promises that are central to the discussion of cave rituals. The first promise is that human beings will come to the remains of One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu to pray. The access to the Underworld, and hence to the western ballcourt, is through a cave. If humans are to keep the promise of the twins and pray at the remains of One Hunahpu and his brother, then they must enter a cave.

Reminiscent of the *Popol Vuh* is the Tzotzil myth that says that the father of the sun lives in the Underworld (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:304). In the incantations from the *Ritual of the Bacabs,* the deity associated with the cave of birth is One Ahau, the Yucatec equivalent of One Hunahpu (Roys 1965:23). In a quotation from Landa con-

cerning the nature of the Underworld, it is stated that the Lord of the Underworld is called Hunhau [Hun Ahau] (Tozzer 1941:132). The Guardian of the Mountain who is worshiped in caves in the Tzeltal area is *Hun Ahau* 'One Ahau' (Blom & La Farge 1927). In the Chol area, the cave god is said to be "our father" (Whittaker & Warkentin 1965:13). He is worshiped in the mountains and caves where the Chol make a cross and pray to him. The commonest title for the sun is also "our father."

The twins' second promise is that One Hunahpu's and Seven Hunahpu's "day name" will be worshiped—that is, Hunahpu or Ahau days. D. Tedlock (1985:46) notes that Hunahpu/Ahau days are still set aside for veneration of the dead in modern Quiche ceremonies; more important, the Period Ending ceremonies of the Classic period always occurred on Ahau days. It will be demonstrated below that these Period Ending events of the Classic period were celebrated in caves.

Evidence of the survival of Period Ending rituals is found at Jacaltenango. The Jacaltecos perform a New Year ceremony that includes the sacrifice of a turkey, the burning of its blood, and a procession to the sacred mountain. At Santa Eulalia, the New Year ceremony also includes a procession to the sacred cave to perform various rituals. The New Year ceremony is the ending of the 365-day cycle called the haab and is not a Period Ending ceremony (the end of the 360-day tun cycle). However, at Jacaltenango, the same rituals are also carried out specifically on days with the name Ahau (La Farge & Byers 1931:157, 161, 165, 173–175).

Postclassic Period Ending Ceremonies

Before beginning the discussion of the kinds of caves found in Maya art and of the Period Ending events performed in those caves, it will be helpful to review what is known about the Period Ending event from colonial sources. In Landa's extremely brief account of Postclassic Period Ending ceremonies, he states that in the temple there was an idol dedicated to the katun and that this idol was worshiped (Tozzer 1941:168). He does not elaborate on how this idol was venerated or even what the idol looked like. In the tenth year of a katun, a second idol representing the next katun was installed in the temple alongside the reigning katun idol. The implication appears to be that this new idol was somehow receiving power from the reigning idol, in preparation for the new idol's role in the next katun. It seems reminiscent of the young heir learning his role prior to accession. At the end of the katun, the idol of that katun was removed from the temple, and the Maya began worshiping the idol of the next katun. For the first ten years of the katun this idol remained alone in the

temple, but like its predecessor it was joined by a new idol representing the next katun period.

Landa implies that the idol was actually called by its katun date, for example, the idol *Uuc Ahau* '7 Ahau'. He says nothing specifically about the Period Ending event itself.

In his discussion of the history of Postclassic Mayapan, Landa noted the presence in the plaza of scupltured stones with hieroglyphs. In reference to similar sculpture at Dzilan, Landa noted that "they were accustomed to erect one of these stones every twenty years" (Tozzer 1941:38). Regarding the content of the inscriptions found on the Mayapan sculptures, Landa said "It is thought that it is a memorial of the foundation and the destruction of that city" (Tozzer 1941:38). Landa's comments mean that the Maya were erecting commemorative sculptures at intervals of twenty years. However, he does not specifically associate these commemorative sculptures with the Period Ending ceremony itself (this distinction between the Period Ending ceremony and the erection of sculpture to commemorate the ceremony is discussed below).

A little more information about the Period Ending ceremony is obtained from the *Chilam Balam* manuscripts. In the *Chilam Balam of Chumayel* a passage is translated as follows:

> This katun today is Katun 3 Ahau. The time has come for the end of its ruler and reign. It is finished. Another one takes its place for a time. This is Katun 1 Ahau. (Roys 1933:89)

In this document, the katun ceremonies involve the setting up of a cup and *lac* 'plate' (Tozzer 1941:169). There are also references to a mat and throne (mats were used as thrones in the Maya area) in association with a rain god. For example, "Katun 11 Ahau is set upon the mat, set upon the throne, when their ruler is set up. Yaxcal Chac [green rain god] is its face" (Roys 1933:77). The "green rain god" is mentioned in another reference: "Katun 11 Ahau is established at Ichcaanzihoo. Yax-hal Chac is its face" (Roys 1933:133).

In reference to the changing of the katun, the *Tizimin* document says that "he (the lord of the katun) gives up his mat, his throne. There comes another cup, another mat, another throne, another reign" (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:60), and the *Chumayel* mentions "the rolling up of the mat of the katun" (Roys 1933:165). A *Chumayel* passages states, "The katun is established at Uuc-yab-nal, it is established at the mouth of the well. . . . His mat and his throne shall face west. . . . The tribute shall be hidden at the mouth of the well" (Roys 1933:133).

These brief references to the Postclassic katun ceremonies demonstrate how severely limited we are in attempting to understand these ceremonies from the colonial period documents alone.

Kinds of Caves

The existence of modern cave ceremonies, much less their importance, would hardly be known without eyewitness accounts, for the material evidence of their existence is not great. Furthermore, before a new ceremony, the cave is often cleaned of the offerings made the previous year (Vogt 1969:448). For the Classic period, the archaeological record of cave rituals exists, but like the modern remains it tells us very little about the ceremonies themselves. However, eyewitness accounts of the Classic Period Ending events and other cave rituals are found in the art of the Classic period, which illustrates these rituals.

Several different kinds of caves, cave openings, and cenotes are illustrated in Maya images and referred to in the hieroglyphic texts. In the following pages I will present the iconographic and epigraphic evidence for caves specifically associated with the rain god Chac and the moon goddess, as well as with the birth of deities.

The T591 Cenote

Cenotes, as previously defined, are pools of water that typically have overhanging rock ledges or are reached through cave entrances. There are several representations of cenotes in the surviving Maya codices. In the Madrid codex (fig. 24a), the rain god Chac sits inside an enclosure that J. E. S. Thompson (1972:150) identified as a cenote. In various texts, the enclosure shape is found as the sign T591 (fig. 24b, c). Kelley (1980) has identified the Madrid scene as the Period Ending 12.9.0.0.0 (3331 B.C.), which is a date in the mythological past. Thus we have our first example of a Period Ending event occurring at a cave location. In the Dresden New Year pages 27a and 28a, a deity is illustrated inside Thompson's "cenote" glyph, which demonstrates that the Postclassic New Year ceremonies were also held at cave locations. On Madrid page 49c, a deer is trapped in a foot snare hanging from a tree. At the base of the tree is the T591 "cenote" glyph. Trees found at the mouth of caves have been discussed above.

On Dresden codex pages 36, 38, and 39, Chac is portrayed either sitting or standing in this same T591 enclosure, only in these illustrations, the T591 enclosure contains water. This suggests that the T591 enclosure itself actually represents the rock overhang of a cenote or the mouth of its cave enclosure.

On Robicsek and Hales Vessel 120, Chac stands in a body of water located inside the jaws of a monster (Robicsek & Hales 1981; also Schele & M. Miller 1986:pl. 122) (figs. 25, 26). The monster's head is out of sight, but the tips of its jaws are visible (fig. 26). Stuart & Houston (1987) have identified the Classic period equivalent of the T591 "cenote/enclosure" glyph as the place-name in the upper text

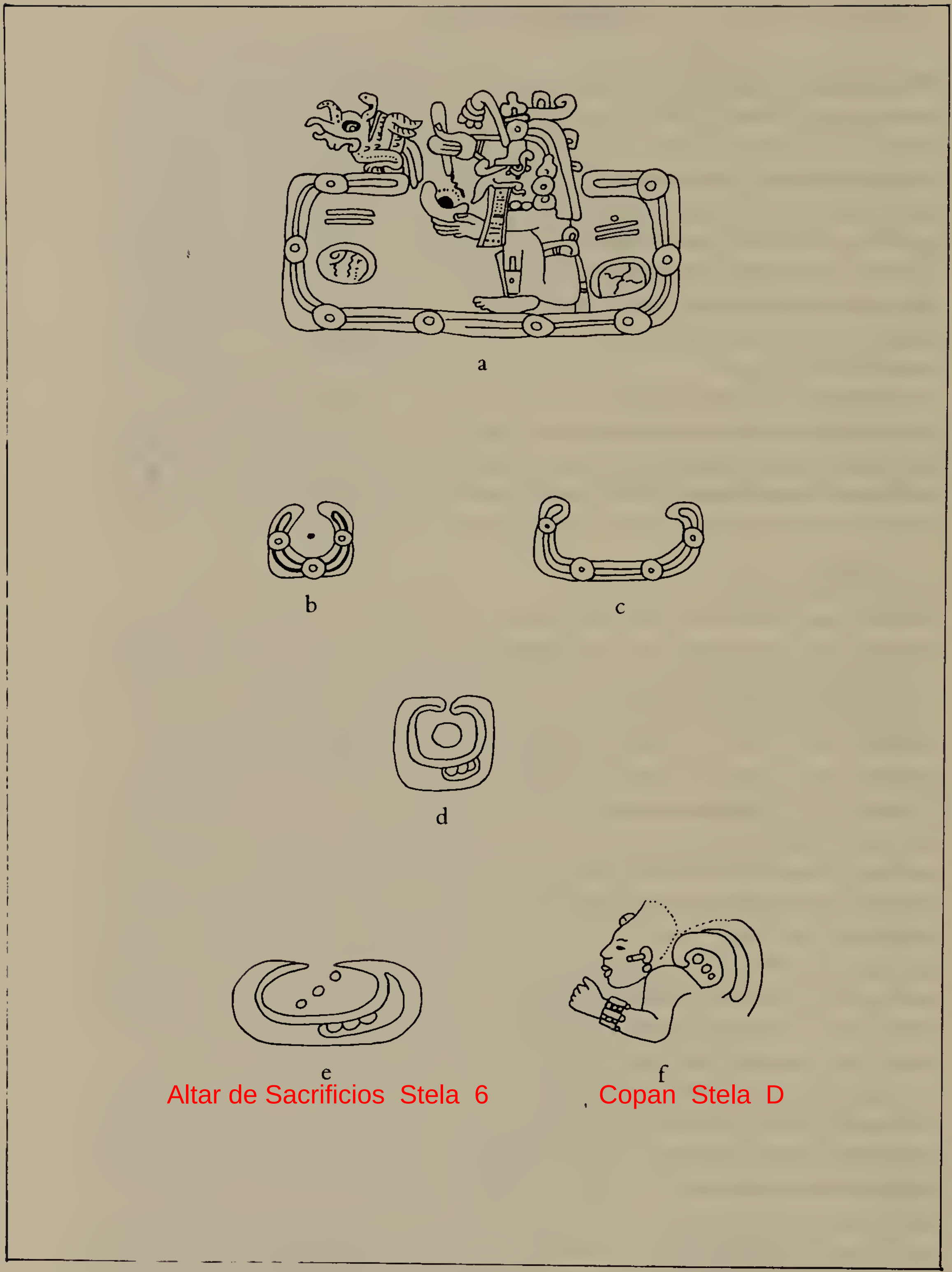


Figure 24. a. Chac in a cenote, Madrid codex, p. 73; b. T591 "cenote" enclosure sign; c. T591 "cenote" enclosure sign; d. T683 "moon cartouche" sign; e. T683 "patron of Ch'en" sign, Altar de Sacrificos Stela 6; f. T683 "patron of Ch'en" sign, Copan Stela D.



Figure 25. Robicsek and Hales Vessel 120 (drawing after Justin Kerr).

of Vessel 120. The jaws of the monster appear to represent the personification of a cave mouth. It is not surprising to find Chac located inside a cave, since it is said in Maya mythology that the home of the rain god Chac is a cave.

On the Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus Lid at Palenque, a monster with similar jaws is found at the base of a stylized ceiba

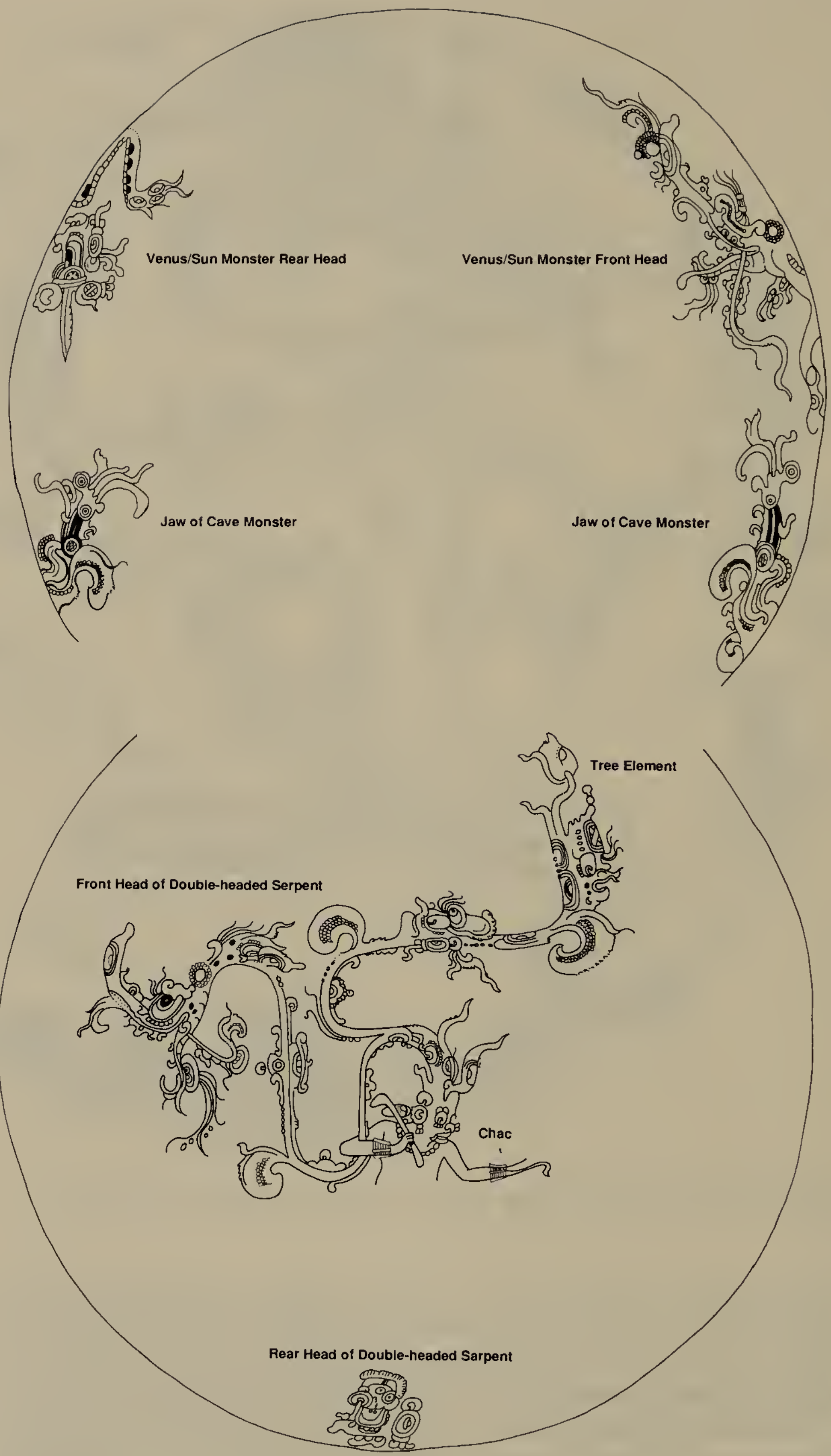


Figure 26. Detail of Vessel 120. AA Kerr 1609

tree (fig. 23). The ruler Pacal II is illustrated falling into the jaws of this monster. The scene has been interpreted as Pacal's descent into the Underworld after his death. Since the entrance into the Underworld is through a cave, this suggests that these open jaws represent the mouth of that cave. Reminiscent of Pacal II's death descent into the Underworld is a Tzotzil burial practice in which the dead are buried at sunset so they can travel with the sun to the Underworld (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:304).

The T683 Cave of the Moon Goddess

The association of the moon goddess with bodies of water and the expression "the departure of the moon to her cave" (*benel u tu ch'e'en*) suggest that some symbol found in conjunction with the moon goddess would represent her watery cave. Such is the case with the T683 cartouche, which is remarkably similar in shape to the T591 "cave" glyph (fig. 24d). The patron of the month Ch'en is represented in the Classic inscriptions by the T683 enclosure, by a portrait of the moon goddess, or by the moon goddess inside the T683 enclosure, which suggests that T683 represents the cave or *ch'en* of the moon goddess (fig. 24e, f) (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:112). I suspect that the circles found in the center of the T683 glyph represent water. Furthermore, in the hieroglyphic text, T683 can carry the phonetic value of *ha,* which means "water."

On Copan Stela 17, the inside of the T683 moon cartouche is a partial quatrefoil shape (fig. 27a). This type of opening appears in Maya art in both profile and full frontal views (fig. 27b, c). In many examples, actors stand, sit, or emerge from these openings. Several authors have identified this form as the mouth of a cave (Coe 1978; Taylor 1978; Benson 1985). I accept this interpretation and will henceforth refer to both profile and full frontal views of this form as the quatrefoil cave opening.[6]

The T526 Cab *Cave*

In the middle scene of the Dresden codex, pages 67b and 30a, God B sits in an enclosure that J. E. S. Thompson (1972:84) identified as a cut-away profile view of a cave (fig. 28a). This enclosure is marked with black circles, each of which has a line curving around it, much like a question mark. The question mark element with cross-hatching is found hanging from an enclosure shape in the T526 sign of the Classic texts (fig. 28c). This enclosure also represents a side view of a cave, as is demonstrated by a comparison with the Dresden codex cave (fig. 28b, d).

T526 is used in the Tzolkin day name Caban, and has been demonstrated to have the value of *cab*. In Yucatec, *cab* can mean "earth." But in most Mayan languages, including Yucatec, the primary mean-



Figure 27. a. Quatrefoil cave opening in "patron of Ch'en" sign, Copan Stela 17; b. quatrefoil cave opening, profile view, Tablet of the Foliated Cross; c. quatrefoil cave opening, full frontal view, Copan Peccary Skull; d. Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus side (drawing after Merle Greene Robertson).

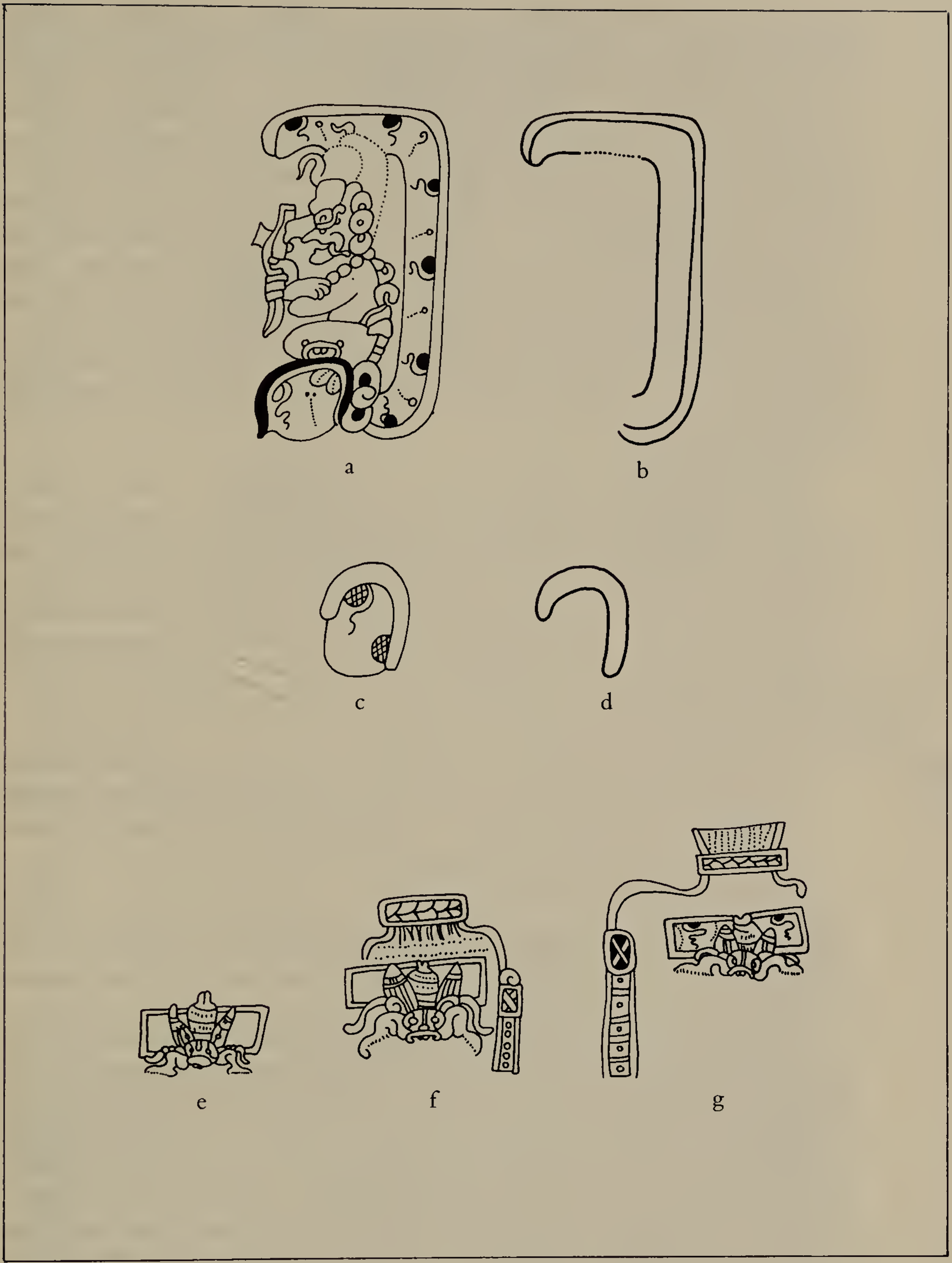


Figure 28. a. *Cab* cave, Dresden codex, p. 30; b. enclosure shape of Dresden codex cave; c. T526 "*cab* cave" sign; d. enclosure shape of the T526 "*cab* cave" sign; e. bee and log hive, Madrid codex, p. 103; f. bee, log hive, and apiary, Madrid codex, p. 106c; g. bee, log hive with cab element, and apiary, Madrid codex, p. 106a.

ing of *cab* (or its cognates) is "bee," "beehive," "honey," "thick liquid," or "wax" (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:277–78). The *cab* sign in the Classic texts is generally interpreted as meaning "earth" (Schele and M. Miller 1986:47). However, in several examples of the T526 *cab* sign, a value of "earth" does not appear to apply. For example, on Copan Stela D (at B9), an actor holds the branch of a tree that has the "question mark" element hanging from it. The fact that the cave enclosure shape of T526 is pictographic suggests that the "question mark" element may also be pictographic in nature. The only element that commonly hangs from both the branch of a tree or the roof of a cave that can be related to any of the meanings of *cab* is a beehive. There is ample evidence that this question mark element is a pictograph of a beehive and that the T526 sign represents a cave with this beehive hanging from its roof. I will refer to this sign as the T526 "*cab* cave" sign.

Bees are associated with caves in several sources. In the count of the katuns from the *Chilam Balam of Mani,* wild bees are said to buzz at the wells and caves (Craine & Reindorp 1979:113). Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934:49) mentioned two varieties of wild bees that make their homes in caves. Tozzer and Allen (1910:300) noted that there is a small bee that constructs hives of a circular form in subterranean cavities. Landa made an important observation concerning the procurement of honey:

> They [bees] do not make honeycomb as ours do, but a kind of small blisters like walnuts of wax all joined one to the other and full of honey. To cut them away they do nothing more than to open the hives and to break away these blisters with a small stick, and thus the honey runs out. (Tozzer 1941:193)

These observations suggest that the question mark element of the T526 "*cab* cave" sign represents a circular beehive with honey running out of it.

A direct correlation between the *cab* question mark element and a beehive with honey is found in the Madrid codex. On pages 103–8, bees sit on rectangular logs (Tozzer & Allen 1910:298) (fig. 28e). In Yucatan, the Maya still use logs to house their bee colonies (Redfield & Villa Rojas 1934:48). The bees and logs are illustrated on Madrid codex page 106c, in what appear to be apiaries (fig. 28f). On page 106a, the bee and the log are again found in an apiary (fig. 28g), but the log is now labeled with the question mark element. In the previous contexts, the log required no label. Thus, the question mark element appears to qualify some aspect of the log. The bee is present in all of these examples, which suggests that the question mark element refers not to the "bee" value of *cab* but to the "beehive and honey"



Figure 29. a. Dresden codex moon goddess; b. birth verb, Temple of the Foliated Cross Alfarda; c. "Venus over *cab* cave" compound, Tortuguero Monument 6; d. "cleft *cab* cave" compound, Temple of the Inscriptions Tablets; e. *u cab* compound, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs.

value. I believe the question mark element indicates that this log contains a beehive with honey.

In the incantations from the *Ritual of the Bacabs,* the Bacabs are located in the cave from which the semipersonified diseases were born (Roys 1965). During the Postclassic period, the month Tzec was dedicated to the deity Hobnil Bacab (Tozzer 1941:157), and in the Classic inscriptions the patron for this month is represented by the pictograph of the T526 "*cab* cave" (J. E. S. Thompson 1950: fig. 22).[7] Hobnil Bacab was the patron of the beekeepers, and *hobnil* means "beehive" in Yucatec (Tozzer 1941:157; Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:215). These associations again support the interpretation of the question mark element as a beehive with honey.

In the Dresden codex, the question mark element is found attached to the forehead of a female deity. Her portrait glyph in the accompanying text is either prefixed or infixed with the question mark element (fig. 29a). Seler (1902–23:I:548) suggested that this element represented a lock of hair from the female deity. J. E. S.

Thompson (1934) noted that an element similar to the question mark appeared to be used for the sound *u* in Landa's alphabet, and because *u* was one of the terms used for the moon, Thompson identified the female deity as a moon goddess. Bricker (1987) noted that the T526 question mark element does not function as this sound, thus eliminating this line of reasoning. But, if the "beehive with honey" value of *cab* (T526) is applied to this goddess, then she becomes a female deity who is somehow associated with honey and beehives. And in fact the moon goddess is associated with honey and beehives in a number of contexts.

Colel cab is a name that appears in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* (Roys 1933:114). *Colel,* which means "lady or mistress," is a term that is still applied to the moon goddess (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:333) Thus, J. E. S. Thompson (1972:47) identified the *colel cab* as a moon goddess and related the just-mentioned Dresden codex female deity to this title. Unfortunately, Thompson used the less common "earth" value of *cab* and considered the *colel cab* deity to be the moon goddess in her "earth" aspect. However, this term was recorded by Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934:49) as a name used to describe the bees of the hive. Hence, the term *colel cab* can be translated as "goddess of the beehive" or "goddess of honey," a reasonable characterization of the Dresden codex goddess. Furthermore, Villa Rojas (1945:103) noted that in Quintana Roo, bees are under the special protection of the Virgin Mary, who is also referred to with the title *colel.* Many of the attributes of the Precolumbian moon goddess were transferred to the Virgin Mary (J. E. S. Thompson 1939).

The other contexts in which the T526 "*cab* cave" sign appears can all be related to a beehive with honey hanging from a cave. Thompson lists under the prognostications for the day name Caban "beekeeping and the birth of Ahaus (lords)" (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:301). In the birth passages of the Palenque Triad of deities, the verb is composed of a pictograph of the T526 "*cab* cave" sign with a hand placed on top of it (Lounsbury 1980:113) (fig. 29b). As noted earlier, there is a pan-Mesoamerican concept that deities were born from caves. A direct association between honey and birth is found in a modern birth ritual that survived from Precolumbian times. Honey is burned under a woman's hammock during childbirth (Redfield & Villa Rojas 1934:357). Lounsbury (1980:113) related the T526 birth verb to several Chol birth expressions, such as *ilan panimil* or *k'el panimil* 'to see the world', *hulel ti panimil* 'to come to earth', and *tal lum* 'to touch earth'.[8] Lounsbury's interpretation is not at odds with the interpretation that the T526 sign represents a cave. The entrance to the world is through the *cab* cave of birth.

The compound most commonly associated with Venus as evening star is composed of a "Venus" glyph over the pictograph of the

T526 "*cab* cave" sign (Closs 1978; Lounsbury 1982) (fig. 29c). On the Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque, a glyph composed of the T526 "*cab* cave" sign with a cleft in it is associated with the first appearance of Venus as evening star (Lounsbury 1982:156) (fig. 29d). The cleft is reminiscent of the profile quatrefoil cave opening. The subject of this Venus event is a skeletal head, which Lounsbury identified as Venus as evening star. The cave scene illustrated on Robiscek and Hales Vessel 120 (fig. 25) includes a date and event in the upper text; these have been identified as a formal position for first appearance of Venus as evening star (Robicsek & Hales 1981:95; Schele & M. Miller 1986: 311). The verb used for this cave event is composed of the skeletal Venus head followed by the T526 pictograph of the *cab* cave with a cleft in it. At first appearance of evening star, Venus emerges from the Underworld, is seen briefly above the horizon, and then returns into the Underworld. The T526 "*cab* cave" sign used in these compounds appears to represent the cave from which Venus emerges or is born.

The Tikal bones discussed in chapter 1 illustrate a canoe full of deities paddling through a body of water. There is nothing in the image to indicate where this water is, but the text uses the "Venus over the *cab* cave" glyph as a verb indicating that the location of the water is a cave. In other words, these deities are traveling across the water of the cave that separates the world from the Underworld.

The T526 "*cab* cave" sign is also found in Classic scenes as a location of various actions. On the sides of the Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus, a series of Pacal II's maternal and paternal ancestors emerge from quatrefoil cave openings marked with the *cab* element (fig. 27d). The notion that ancestors are associated with caves is supported by the modern Tzotzil Maya belief that the ancestors live inside caves (Vogt 1969:298; Nash 1970:22).

The T526 pictograph of the *cab* cave is also used in the Classic texts in a standardized phrase, which I believe expresses a place-name. Many texts contain this phrase, which is composed of the possessive pronoun *u* 'his' followed by the T526 "*cab* cave" sign (inflected with the T136 and T126 suffixes) and concluded with a personal name (Kelley 1962a:329) (fig. 29e). The subjects named in these phrases include living rulers and other nobles, as well as ancestors and deities. These *u cab* phrases have a verbal sense, as is indicated by their inflection; the T136 suffix always appears on verbs, and the T126 suffix marks these "events" as background information in terms of the overall narrative. Grammatically, they stand alone as independent clauses, but semantically they are always appended to a preceding clause that contains an event on the event line (that is, marked in some way as foregrounded information). Because of these structural contexts, the *u cab* phrases have previously been paraphrased as "in

the earth or land of X" (Schele 1985d), or "under the auspices of X" (D. Stuart 1982). However, using the pictographic value of the *cab* cave, this phrase would have the meaning of "the *cab* cave of X." The fact that the *u cab* phrase is always marked with an AEI (T126) as background information fits with the interpretation that these phrases are indicating the location of the featured event. In other words, they are giving background information about the event itself.

The interpretation of the *u cab* phrases as place-name statements produces some very reasonable results in the texts that have no images. For example, on the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs from Palenque, the ruler Kuk II is said to have celebrated the first katun of his accession. This is followed by the *u cab* phrase, and Pacal is named as subject. Pacal appears to be an ancestor of Kuk (see appendix), and at this point in time Pacal had been dead for over one hundred years. I infer from this statement that the ritual involving Kuk's anniversary of accession occurred at a cave associated with his ancestor Pacal. Modern rituals are still conducted at caves associated with ancestors (Vogt 1969). Other historical actions that are stated to occur at a *cab* cave are discussed in chapter 7.

In summary, the T526 "*cab* cave" sign represents a cave associated with the Bacabs, the moon goddess, Venus as evening star, ancestors, bees, beehives, and the theme of birth.

The Cave of Chac

Caves specifically associated with Chac, the rain god, are found in both Classic and Postclassic scenes. The following discussion summarizes the different ways in which these caves were illustrated as well as the different qualities or aspects of these caves.

The Cauac *Monster and the T528 Cave of Chac*

The T528 sign used in the Tzolkin day name Cauac (fig. 1c) also takes the shape of a cave enclosure, as demonstrated by a comparison with the T526 cave enclosure (fig. 1b). Evidence that the T528 enclosure does represent a cave is found in the glyph for the month Ch'en, which uses T528 as its main sign with a "black" prefix (fig. 1e). As noted above, in most Maya languages, the primary meaning of the word *ch'e'en* (or its cognates) is "cave."

A zoomorphic head found in Maya art (fig. 30a) has been referred to in the literature as the "*cauac* monster" because some of the elements found on it are also found in the T528 *cauac* sign (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:87; Taylor 1978) (fig. 1c). These elements are a cluster of drops and a dotted half-circle (fig. 1d). A quatrefoil cave opening is often found in the top of the *cauac* monster's head (fig. 30a). This means that the *cauac* monster is the personification of a cave.

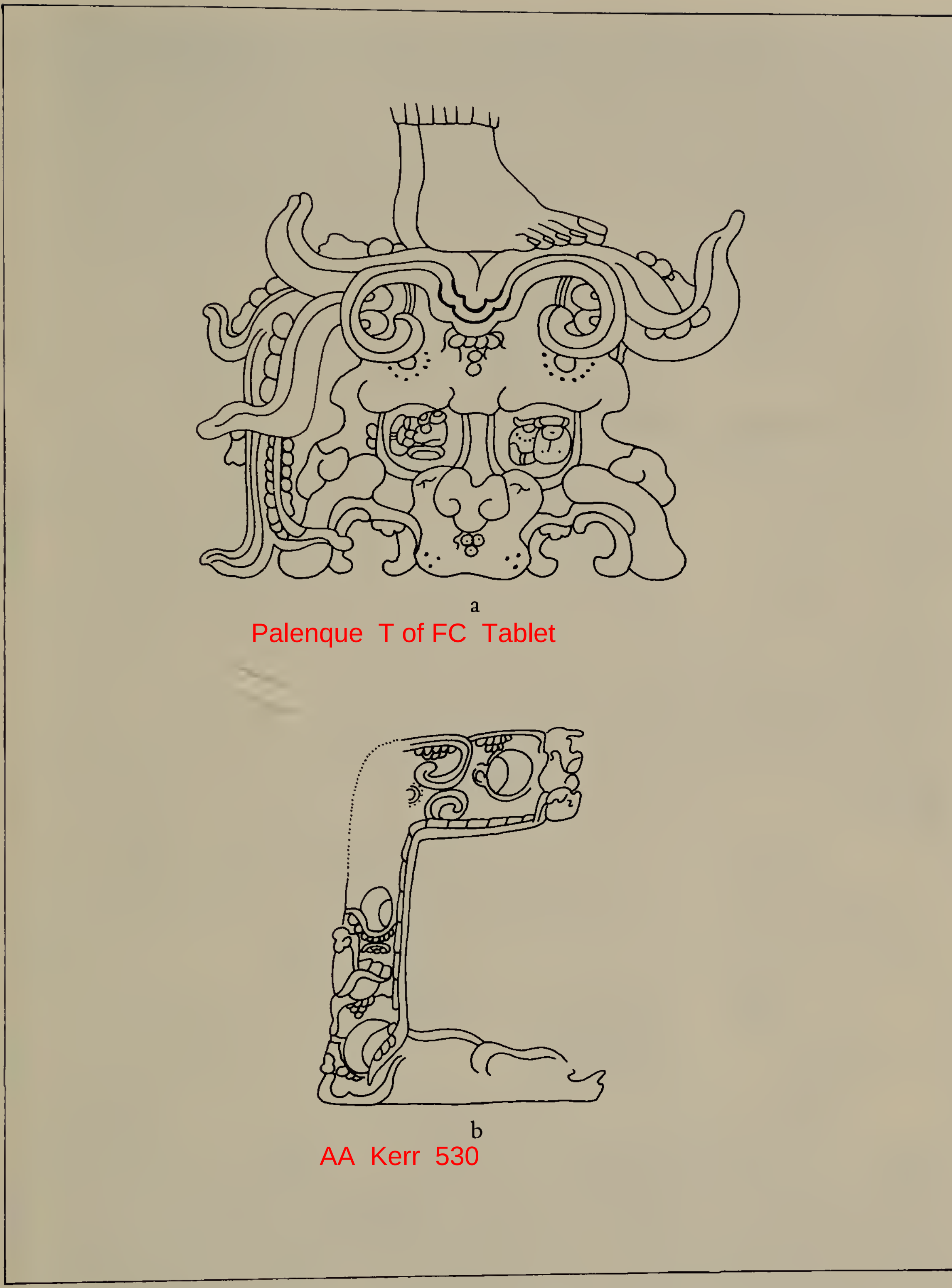


Figure 30. a. *Cauac* monster, Tablet of the Foliated Cross; b. *cauac* monster, Lords of the Underworld Vase 11 (drawing after Justin Kerr).



Figure 31. Tablet of the Foliated Cross (drawing courtesy Merle Greene Robertson).

Palenque T of FC Tablet

On the left side of the Tablet of the Foliated Cross image, the ruler Chan Bahlum II stands on top of a *cauac* monster with a quatrefoil cave opening in its head (fig. 31). The text associated with this action states that the occasion for this cave ritual was his accession. Pohl and Pohl (1983:51) have suggested that this scene represents Chan Bahlum II performing his accession rituals at a cave location.[9] Thus, the *cauac* monster functions in the image to specify the geographical location of the action.

In addition to the quatrefoil cave opening, other cave enclosures are formed by the open mouth of a *cauac* monster (Coe 1978:76) (fig. 30b). On Piedras Negras Stela 5, the open jaws of a *cauac* monster are viewed from the side (Maler 1901–3:II:no. I, pl. XV). Inside the jaws or cave mouth, the ruler sits on a jaguar throne.

Cauac monsters are often bicephalic, with a fleshed front head and a skeletal rear head. Quirigua Zoomorph P takes the shape of a double-headed *cauac* monster (Maudslay 1889–1902:II:pl. 57). The ruler sits in the mouth of the front head. On the front of Copan Stela B, the ruler is illustrated standing in an enclosure formed by the open mouth of the front head of the *cauac* monster (Maudslay 1889–1902: I:pl. 35; Baudez 1985) (figs. 32a, b). The sides of this stela are composed of stacked *cauac* heads, and the stela back is the rear head of the *cauac* monster (fig. 33). Although the *cauac* monster has been elongated to conform to the shape of the stela, the ruler is still standing inside a personification of a cave mouth. The text states that the occasion was a Period Ending event (22 August, A.D. 731).

D. Stuart and Houston (D. Stuart & Houston 1987; D. Stuart 1987) have identified place-names in the Classic texts. On Aguateca Stela 1, the compound T117:529 functions as the place-name for the location of the Period Ending event (30 June, A.D. 741) (fig. 34a) (see chapter 5 for a discussion of this place-name). T529 is a variant of T528 that uses a cleft opening rather than the more common side view of the cave enclosure (fig. 34b).[10] Thus, not only are there images that illustrate that Period Ending events occurred at *cauac* caves, but also there are texts that directly state that these rituals occurred at a *cauac* cave.

At Caracol, a series of "altars" have the quatrefoil cave opening carved on their tops. Within the quatrefoil opening are Period Ending Ahau dates. These simple monuments commemorate, in a very abbreviated form, the Period Ending events that were conducted inside caves.[11]

The Yucatec word *cauac* has a range of meanings encompassing "rain," "storm," "thunder," and "lightning" (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:87). This means that the T528 "*cauac* cave" sign and the *cauac* monster are marked with elements that indicate that they represent a cave of "rain," "storm," "thunder," and "lightning." This is in ac-



Figure 32. Left. Copan Stela B, front; Right. Copan Stela B, side.

cord with Maya mythology, where it is said that these natural phenomena are created in a cave. *Cauac* is cognate of *Chac,* the name of the god of rain, thunder, and lightning, who lived in a cave. It seems a reasonable conclusion that T528 is a pictograph of Chac's cave. By extension, the *cauac* monster and its various forms also represent the cave of Chac.

On Dresden codex pages 65b–68b, God B is illustrated performing a variety of functions at different locations (Thomas 1888; Barthel 1953; J. E. S. Thompson 1972; Kelley 1976:97). Thomas noted that the glyph in the second position of each caption text refers to the location where God B is performing his activity. Barthel (1953) confirmed this interpretation. On page 66b, God B sits on a *cauac*



Figure 33. Copan Stela B, rear.

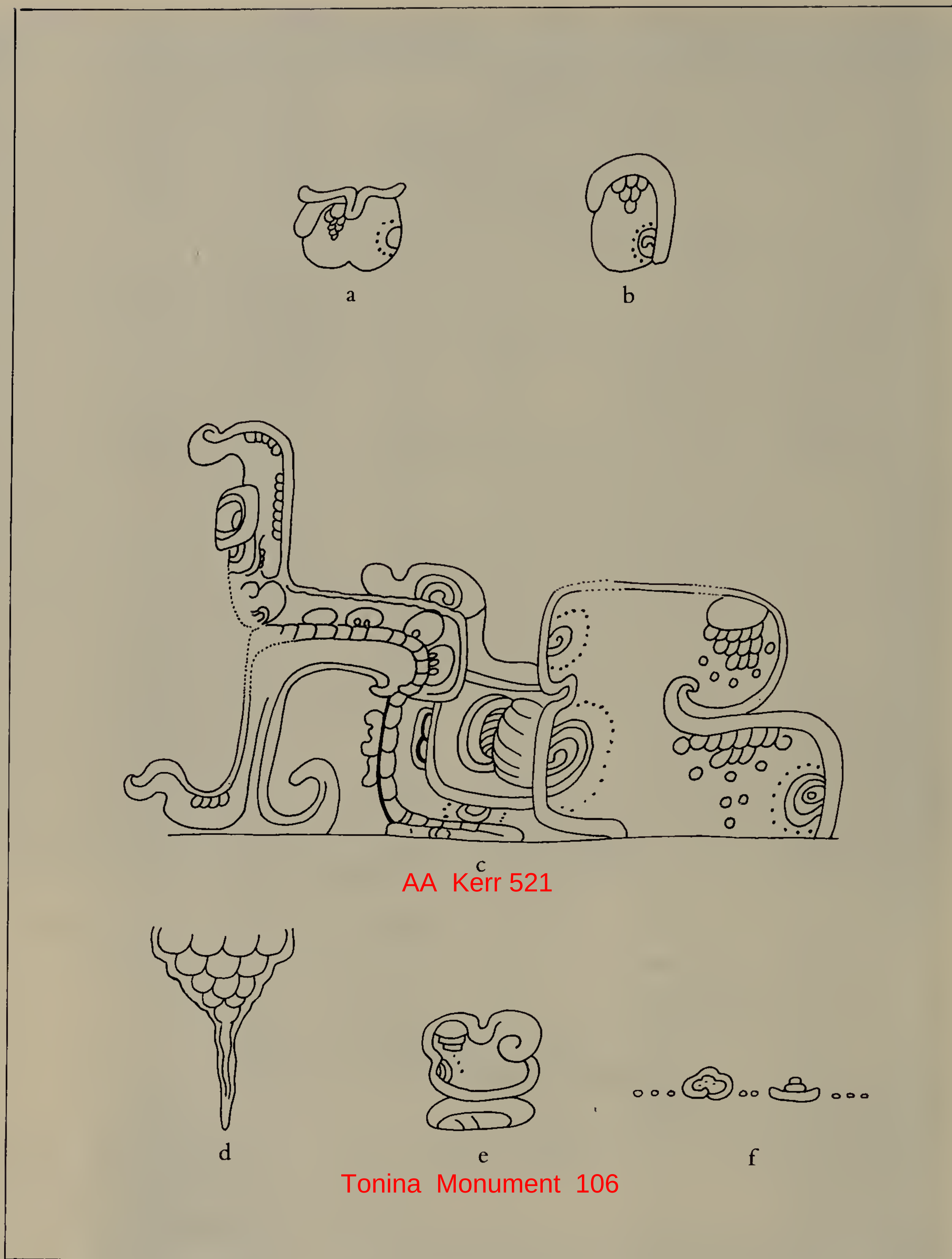


Figure 34. a. T529; b. T528; c. *cauac* monster, Lords of the Underworld Vase 4 (drawing after Justin Kerr); d. cluster of drops element; e. T529 "tun" glyph, Tonina Monument 106; f. water, Tikal Bones.

monster. The second glyph in the accompanying caption text is composed of a locative prepositional prefix with the meaning "in, within," and a glyph (T117:507) that D. Stuart (1987:17) has read phonetically as *wits*. This word has the meaning of "mountain," "peak," or "hill"; hence Stuart concluded that the *cauac* monster represents a hill. However, as noted above, *wits* is often used to refer to the home of the rain god, and the rain god lives inside—that is, in the cave.

D. Stuart (1987:21) has noted that in some cases a T117 *wi* sign is found prefixed to T529. He suggested that this was a logograph for "hill" or "mountain." T529 is the variant of T528 that uses a cleft opening of the cave rather than the profile view. I suggest that this compound represents the mountain cave of Chac. The combination of the cave and the mountain aspects of T528 is found in the glyph for the month Ch'en (T528 with a "black" prefix) (fig. 1e). As noted earlier, *ch'e'en* has the meaning of "cave," but it is also used in most Mayan languages to refer to a large rock or crag (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:111).

Elements of Chac's Cave

The elements of the T528 *cauac* sign are a dotted half circle and a cluster of drops hanging from the enclosure shape. J. E. S. Thompson (1970:223) suggested that both elements of the T528 glyph represented a segment of the *cauac* monster's body. Given the "rain" association for the T528 *cauac* sign, Thompson simply concluded that the T528 elements were symbols for water. The following discussion will examine at length the pictographic nature of these two elements.

Cauac monsters are occasionally illustrated on their side (fig. 34c). In these cases, the cluster of drops does not turn with the *cauac* monster but rather remains in a vertical position. This suggests that its vertical hanging position is intrinsic to its nature. In some examples of T528 and T529, a curving line encloses the cluster of drops and hangs like a tail off the end (fig. 34d). This configuration implies a liquid nature. Given the linguistic association of *cauac* with water, the logical conclusion is that the cluster of drops is actually a pictographic representation of water hanging or "raining" from the roof of a cave.

The second distinctive element of the T528 *cauac* sign is a dotted circle with an interior hooked shape (fig. 1d). This element is found in other contexts. Taube (1985:172) identified this element as a sprouting corn kernel on the portrait of the corn god. In a later paper, Taube (1989) suggested that it represented a maize tamale. Whether this element is a pictograph of a corn kernel or of a tamale, I believe it also has a corn association in the T528 glyph. Corn is associated with caves in two ways. First of all, man was said to have been

created from corn and water that were brought from a mountain cave. Second, man obtained his essential food, maize, from a mountain cave with the help of a rain god. I believe that the dotted circle element of T528 represents the corn of the rain god's cave.

Classic period evidence for the association of corn with Chac's cave is found on the Tablet of the Foliated Cross (fig. 31). On the left side of this scene, Chan Bahlum II is illustrated facing a stylized maize plant. He stands on a *cauac* monster (the personification of the mountain cave) with corn foliage emanating from its quatrefoil cave opening. Two glyphs appeared infixed in the monster's eyes (fig. 30a). The left glyph will be discussed in chapter 5; the right glyph block is composed of a *wits* 'mountain' and *nal* 'corn' compound for which Karl Taube and Bruce Love (pers. comm. 1987) suggested a reading of "corn mountain" and which I would read as "the mountain of the corn." The notion that the *cauac* monster, the personification of Chac's cave, is labeled with a name glyph has precedents in illustrations of captives who are also labeled with name glyphs (Proskouriakoff 1964:150–51). Hence, Chac's cave is not only illustrated with corn foliage emanating from its opening, but also it is specifically named as the "the mountain of the corn" cave. The association of Chac with corn is further attested by Landa, who stated that Chac was also a god of corn (Tozzer 1941:161; J. E. S. Thompson 1970: 251). Guiteras-Holmes (1961:287) stated that the rain god is the protector of corn. The evidence just presented supports my belief that T528 represents the mountain cave of Chac, and that its two distinctive elements are the water hanging from its roof and the sacred maize on its floor.

The Stalagmite of Chac's Cave

The fact that the rain god's cave is watery means that Chac's cave contained drip-water formations. It can also be inferred from the cluster of water drops hanging from the T528 *cauac* sign that Chac's cave contained stalagmites.

The Period Ending expression on Tonina Monument 106 is recorded as "5 Ahau, the seating of the tun" (9.8.0.0.0 5 Ahau 3 Ch'en, or 24 August, A.D. 593) (Mathews n.d.a.). In this "tun" glyph (fig. 34e), the cluster of drops has been replaced by an element shaped like stacked rectangles. I believe the rectangular shape of the Tonina element represents a drip-water formation hanging from the ceiling of the cave. These stacked rectangles appear in an inverted position in the water of the cave on the Tikal Bones (fig. 34f) and on the Palenque Temple XIV Tablet (see chapter 7 for a discussion of this tablet). Their inverted position suggests that they represent stalagmites rising beside the water, not an uncommon sight in limestone caves.[12]

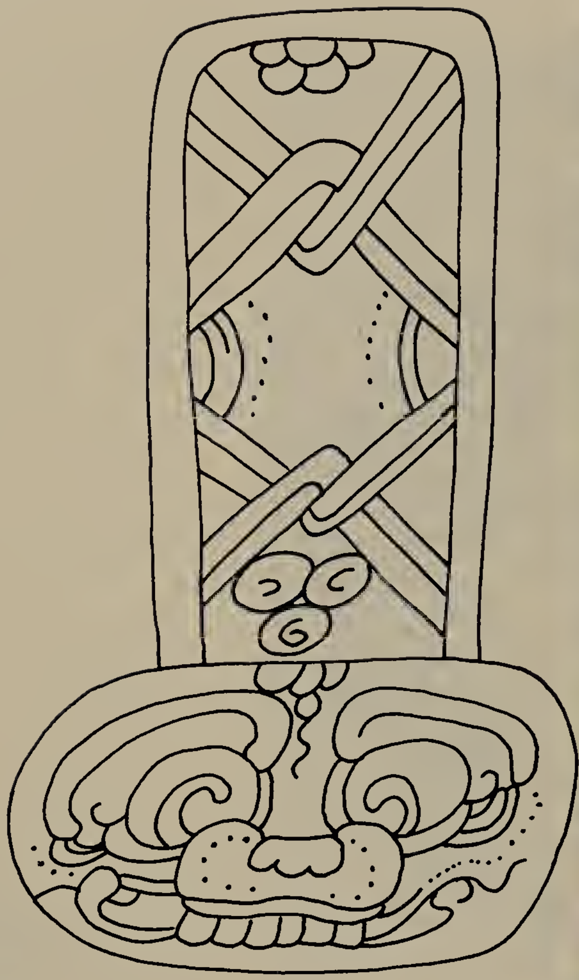


Copan Peccary Skull

Figure 35. Copan Peccary Skull (drawing after Barbara Fash).

An Early Classic scene on the Copan Peccary Skull (fig. 35) actually illustrates a stalagmite. The image shows a full frontal view of the quatrefoil cave opening. The viewer is looking into a cave mouth. Within the cave, two actors flank a *cauac* monster and an upright stone that is also marked with the water drops and maize symbol of the T528 *cauac* sign (fig. 36a). The only natural upright stones with water drops that exist inside caves are stalagmites. The stalagmite is the *tun* 'stone' of Chac's cave.

Furthermore, the Copan Peccary Skull demonstrates that the stalagmite was a central feature of the Period Ending event conducted in Chac's cave. The text on the Peccary Skull states that the action is a Period Ending ritual. Both actors direct their gaze to the central area of the image, which places emphasis on this stalagmite column. This

Copan Peccary a Skull

Figure 36. Left. Copan Peccary Skull detail; Right. Copan Stela D.

strongly suggests that the column itself is central to the Period Ending rituals. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, there is archaeological evidence for stalagmite rituals in the Maya lowlands.

The Stalagmite as the *Tun* 'Stone'

The Maya word *tun* means both "stone" and "year" (the 360-day period). However, "stone" is the etymological meaning of the word *tun,* while the meaning "year" was a later innovation (Justeson & Mathews 1983). In certain phrases, the T528 *cauac* sign is used with the phonetic complements *tu* or *n*. This indicates that in these contexts the reading of this compound is not *cauac* but *tun* (Fox & Justeson 1984) (fig. 1f). The T528 *tun* compound has the meaning of "stone" in some of these contexts and in others, the meaning "year."

In these T528:116 *tun* 'stone' compounds, the T528 *cauac* sign does not have a phonetic value. Why then is it the main sign of this

compound? I suggest that in these cases, the T528 *tun* 'stone' compound is not referring to any stone but to a *cauac* stone—Chac's stone, the stalagmite. Hence, the T528 *cauac* main sign carries a semantic value in these compounds.

Nikolai Grube (cited in D. Stuart 1987:42 and in Schele 1989:39) has phonetically deciphered a verb used in Period Ending ceremonies as the Yucatec verb *ts'ap,* which has the meaning of *hincar algo en el suelo* (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:878), "to thrust something in the ground." In Tzotzil, its meaning is "to pierce, to place in posthole, piercing with force (penis)" (Laughlin 1975:100). A probable Chorti cognate of *ts'ap* is the verb *u-?tsah* which means to "penetrate" (John Fought, pers. comm. 1989). In the hieroglyphic texts, the *ts'ap* verb is followed by the name of the object that is thrust in the ground. On Quirigua Stela A, the Period Ending event in question is 9.17.5.0.0 6 Ahau 13 Kayab, and the object is called "the 6 Ahau *tun*." This *ts'ap* verb has been interpreted to be referring to the erection of the stela, and the "6 Ahau stone" to be the formal name of the stela (Schele 1989). I reject this interpretation and suggest instead that "he thrusts the 6 Ahau stone in the ground" refers to the ritual of erecting a stalagmite column in Chac's cave during the Period Ending ceremony.

Why did the Maya perform such an act? I believe that one answer to this question may be found in the Mesoamerican birth metaphor in which the phallic staff is stuck into the vagina/womb/cave, and the result is rain. In the Period Ending ceremony, the ruler sticks the stalagmite/penis into the vagina/womb/cave and symbolically creates rain. This action reflects the meanings of the verb *ts'ap* cited above: "pierce, penetrate, piercing with force (penis), thrust."

Why do we not find more examples of stalagmites stuck in the ground inside caves? Probably because no one has gone looking for reset stalagmites in caves. Furthermore, like the objects of the modern cave ceremonies, the stalagmite might have been removed and replaced with a new one at each ceremony so that there would be a limited distribution (fitting into this concept is the Tzotzil *ts'ap* which also means "replacement post").

The notion that the Maya lord "erected" a staglagmite stone (Chac's stone) on the occasion of tun endings means that the all-important katun ceremony is not just the end of the twenty-year period, but also the completion of a cycle of twenty stalagmite erections.

Why did the Maya lord symbolically make rain during the Period Ending event? I do not know, but obviously this action was not directly related to the agriculture cycle because the Maya calendar was not tied to the seasons. However, there is abundant evidence that the lord did play the role of Chac. Besides the numerous illustrations of lords dressed as Chac, the most common titles found in the nominal phrases of lords are Bacab and Chac-te.

The T528 *tun* compound with the meaning of "year" is found in special Period Ending phrases, such as "the seating of the tun (year)" (fig. 1g). Why was the word *tun* 'stone' used to express "year" (the 360-day period), and why was the T528 *tun* compound used to write this word in the hieroglyphic text? The answer to both questions lies in the role of the stalagmite during the Period Ending event (the ritual ending the 360-day period). Given the indication that the rituals ending the "year" occurred at caves associated with Chac, and that the erection of the stalagmite *tun* 'stone' was the ritual focus of this event, it is not surprising to find that the word and hieroglyph for "year" would reflect this fact.

Another word that was used to express the period of 360 days is *haab*. What is pertinent to this discussion about stalagmites is that the etymological meaning of *haab* is "water." Again we must ask, why was a word meaning "water" used to express "year"? The answer is again found in the stalagmite, the focus of the Period Ending event. The stalagmite is the "drip-water stone," the source of sacred water, as argued by J. E. S. Thompson (1975:xx).

The T528 *tun* compound is found in a number of contexts that suit the interpretation that it represents Chac's stone, the stalagmite. On Copan stone incensarios, it occurs in clauses that can be phonetically read *sac lak tun* (fig. 37a) (D. Stuart 1986a). In some examples, the *sac lak tun* clause is prefixed with *u,* which suggests that it is a possessive noun phrase. D. Stuart noted that in some examples the phonetic *lak* 'clay plate' is replaced with a pictograph of either a rimmed bowl or a cylindrical vessel with spikes such as are commonly found as clay incensarios. Thus the meaning of *lak* as "clay plate" or "clay incensario" is confirmed in this context. Furthermore, on Classic period clay plates, there are possessive noun phrases composed of *u sac lak* 'his white plate' and a subject's name; these appear to name the owner of the plate. However, D. Stuart translated *lak tun* as "incensario of stone" and interpreted this expression as the name label of the stone incensario on which it is located. In Stuart's interpretation, the *tun* 'stone' would be functioning as an adjective, but in Maya compound noun formation the adjective must precede the noun. If we accept the assumption that the hieroglyphs reflect Mayan languages, then *sac lak tun* must be translated as "the white plate of the stone," and the "stone" is a noun functioning as a possessor.

What can this phrase mean? In the Postclassic period, one of the rituals of the Period Ending ceremony involved the "setting up" of a cup and *lac* 'plate' (Roys 1933:101). Used clay incensarios have been found inside caves (Seler 1901:163–69; Blom & La Farge 1927). Thus, it is conceivable that the *sac lac tun* is the white plate that was used to burn incense in front of the stalagmite during the Period

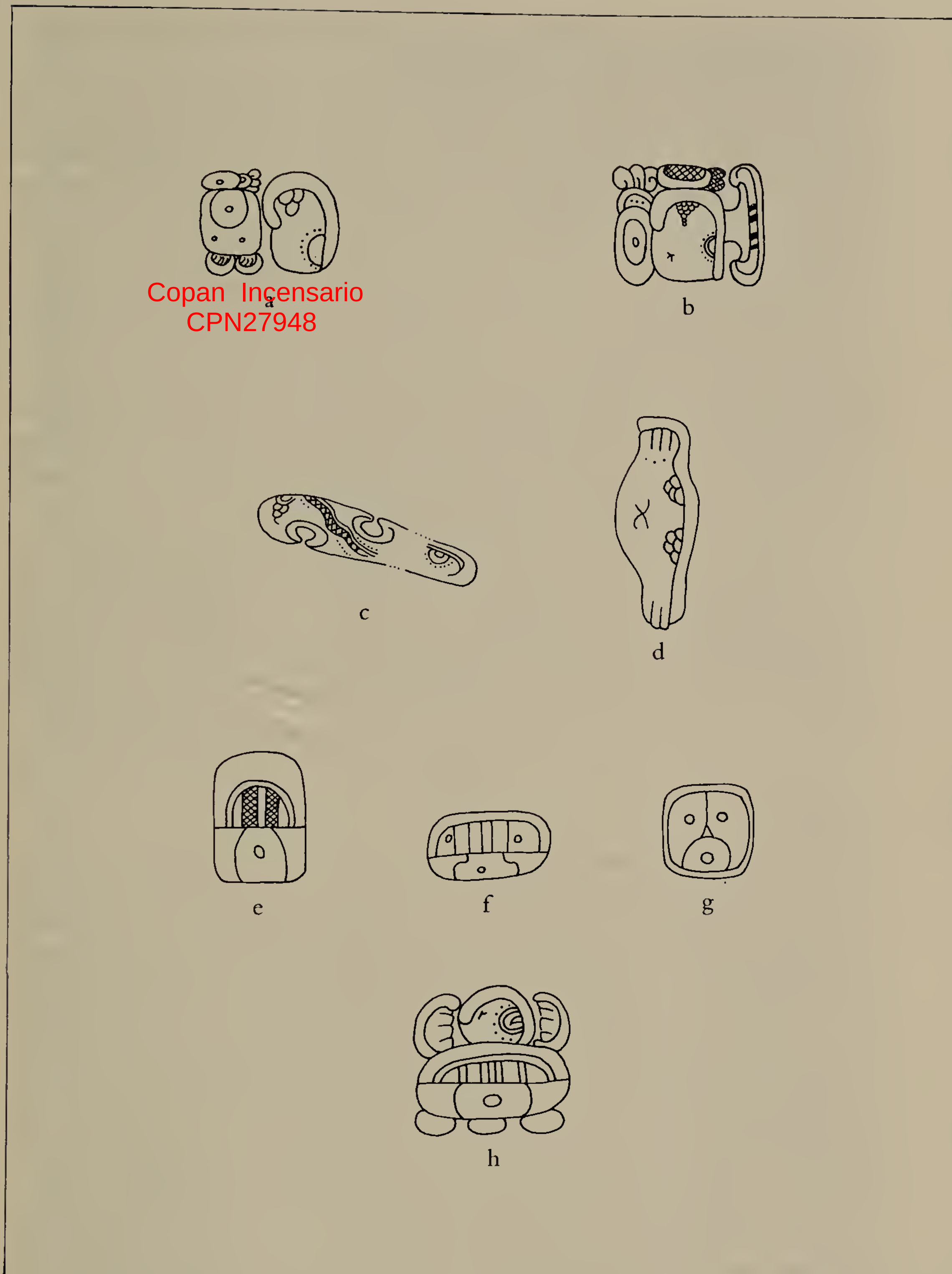


Figure 37. a. *Sac lac tun* phrase, Copan incensario (drawing after David Stuart); b. *sac tun na* phrase, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs; c. *cauac* axe, Dumbarton Oaks Tablet; d. armadillo shell, Madrid codex; e. T548 *tun* 'drum' sign; f. T548 *tun* 'drum' conflated with *ahau* sign, Paris codex; g. Ahau day name sign; h. "katun" sign.

Ending event. It is of interest that *Sac lak tun* is also the name of a cave at Mayapan (D. Stuart 1986a:5).[13]

The second occurrence of the T528 *tun* compound is found on the Palenque Tablet of the 96 Glyphs. This narrative relates a series of accession events for three successive rulers of Palenque (Kan Xul II, Chaacal III, and Kuk II). These accessions are stated as "his seating on the jaguar throne." This phrase is followed by a compound that appears to indicate the location of these accession events. It can be phonetically read as *sac tun na,* which translates directly as "white stone house" (fig. 37b). In Mayan constructions, the word for "white" must act as an adjective to "stone," and thus this phrase could be translated as "the white stone of the house." If the word for "stone" functions as an adjective in this compound noun construction, then an equally plausible translation of *sac tun na* would be "the white-stone house"—that is, a house made of white stone. However, *sac tun na* cannot be translated as "the white house of stone."

A distinctive feature of Palenque House E is that the background color of its stucco facade is white, as opposed to the red found on other Palenque buildings. Based on this fact and Kubler's (1969:26) speculation that House E of the Palace might have been the center of accession ritual at Palenque, Freidel (pers. comm. 1985), D. Stuart (pers. comm. 1987), and Schele (1985c:96) have further speculated that *sac tun na* is the name of House E. However, even the translation of *sac tun na* as "house of white stone" is not a distinctive description of House E, since all the buildings at Palenque are made of white stone.

In many regions of the Maya area, caves are referred to as "houses" and specifically "the house of the stone." They are also the home of the rain god. The phrase *sac tun na* could mean "the white stone [stalagmite] of the house [cave]." Given that the Palenque ruler Chan Bahlum II is illustrated on the Tablet of the Foliated Cross performing rituals at Chac's cave (the *cauac* monster), it is likely that the subsequent rulers Kan Xul II (Chan Bahlum II's younger brother), Chaacal III, and Kuk II also performed accession rituals at Chac's cave. The implication of the translation "the white stone of the house" is that accession rituals, like the Period Ending event on the Peccary Skull, were performed in front of Chac's stone, the stalagmite.

The *sac* element of *sac tun na* may refer to the glistening white color of stalagmites, or it may be a reference to the north/white associations that the Maya attached to ritual objects and locations. For example, in the *Ritual of the Bacabs,* the cave of birth is called "the house of the white Pauahtun" (Roys 1933:22).

My final remark concerning the T528 *tun* compound is a slight digression from the topic of stalagmites, in order to correct a misconception about the use of T528 on objects such as axe heads and

spears. Like *cauac* monsters, these objects (fig. 37c) are often infixed with the T528 *cauac* elements (the cluster of drops and the dotted circle). This suggests that, like the *cauac* monsters, these T528 elements on axe heads are referring to the basic value of T528, which is *cauac*. Why then are axe heads so marked? In Maya mythology, flint and obsidian are said to be formed when lightning (*cauac*) strikes the earth.[14] Axe heads, which are made of obsidian or flint, are marked with *cauac* elements to indicate that they are a manifestation of lightning and by extension, of Chac. Furthermore, armadillo shells (fig. 37d) have *cauac* markings, and it is said that the shell of the armadillo was created when lightning struck the animal during a rain storm (Fought 1972:158–66). Because T528 can be read *tun* in certain contexts, it has been suggested that axe heads are marked with the T528 elements to indicate that they are made of *tun* 'stone' (Justeson & Mathews 1983:588; Schele & M. Miller 1986:46). The common feature between obsidian and the shell of an armadillo is obviously not stone, but that they were both created by Chac's lightning.

When the phonetic complements *wi, ca, tu,* or *n* are added to the T528 pictograph of Chac's cave, they indicate more than just the phonetic pronunciation being *wits, cauac,* or *tun*. They specify or emphasize a particular aspect of Cac's cave—that is, its "mountain," "lightning/thunder," "stalagmite-stone," or "Period Ending" aspects.

The Stalagmite as the *Tun* 'Drum'

Brinton (1895:92) identified T548 (fig. 37e) as a pictograph of a horizontal drum, the *tun'kul*. Kelley (1976:135) cited evidence for an ancestral Mayan root of **tun* for this horizontal drum; and Justeson and Mathews (1983) presented additional evidence for the existence of this ancestral root. The T548 *tun* 'drum' sign is used to represent the sound *tun* in the phonetic spelling of the name of God N, Pauahtun (Coe 1973:15). In this context, it freely substitutes with T528. The T548 *tun* 'drum' sign appears in Distance Numbers and Initial Series dates, where it expresses the period of 360 days, the tun (year).

Evidence that the T548 *tun* 'drum' sign was associated with the Period Ending rituals is found in the Paris codex. In the scenes of the katun ceremonies, a deity sits on the T548 drum (fig. 37f). This drum is conflated with an Ahau glyph (fig. 37g). All Period Ending events occur on days named Ahau, which means that the T548 drum has been conflated with the tzolkin day name of the Period Ending event. That the Postclassic Period Ending events also occurred at caves is demonstrated in the Madrid codex (fig. 24a), where a Chac sits in the T591 cave enclosure on the occasion of the 12.9.0.0.0 Period Ending event (3331 B.C.).

The T548 drum is directly associated with Chac in the katun glyph, itself. This glyph is composed of the pictograph of Chac's

cave (T528) stacked on top of a T548 *tun* 'drum' sign (fig. 37h). Landa's *ca* sign occurs on both sides of the T528 sign. The *ca* phonetic complements appear to reinforce the reading of *cauac(a)* for T528 by indicating that the word being represented begins and ends with *ca*. Thus the glyph for the Maya twenty-year period, commonly called a katun by modern scholars, may have been called a *cauac tun* by the Maya—literally a "lightning drum," that is, Chac's drum.[15] Given the indications that the Period Ending rituals celebrated at the end of the katun occurred at Chac's cave, it is not surprising to find that the hieroglyph for *katun* incorporates the sign for Chac's cave (T528) and an element of Chac's cave, his drum (T548).

In Maya mythology, it was thought that lightning and thunder issued forth from the rain god's cave, and that one of the causes of lightning was the beating of the rain god's drum (Guiteras-Holmes 1961:153, 192; Vogt 1969:302). J. E. S. Thompson (1970:266), cited the word *pec,* which means "to drum" and "to thunder," concluded that the beating of the rain god's drum also produced thunder. The only natural drum found inside the rain god's cave is a stalagmite. When a stalagmite is struck, it produces a deep resonance that mimics the sound of distant thunder (Macleod & Puleston 1978:75). In fact, the modern caretaker of the Loltun cave in central Yucatan often demonstrates the drum quality of the stalagmite to visitors at the cave. These observations suggest that one of the functions of the stalagmite was to serve as the rain god's drum; as such, it was the mythical source of both thunder and lightning. It is of interest that the slow repetition of the word *tun* mimics the sound of the stalagmite/stone drum. The function of the stalagmite as a thunder drum is reminiscent of the *acantun* stalagmite. *Acan* can also mean "to thunder."

The interpretation that the T548 *tun* 'drum' sign represents Chac's stalagmite drum means that the free substitution in the Pauahtun's name between this sign and the T528 *tun* 'stone' sign is based on more than just a homophonic value. They are the same thing—Chac's *tun* 'stone' and Chac's *tun* 'drum.' Furthermore, as the following discussion will demonstrate, these two signs also had a semantic value in this context.

In his sixteenth-century manuscript, Landa stated that the four Bacabs were brothers placed at the four cardinal points to hold up the sky (Tozzer 1941:137). Landa further stated that these Bacabs were also known by the names Chac and Pauahtun. The Pauahtuns are said to be wind gods in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel:* "These are the angels of the winds which were set up while he created the star, when the world was not yet lighted, when there was neither heaven nor earth: The Red Pauahtun, the White Pauahtun, the Black Pauahtun, the Yellow Pauahtun" (Roys 1933:110). In 1813, the Pauahtuns were still referred to as wind gods in a Yucatec corn-

field ceremony: "They are identical with the winds and the four cardinal points from which they blow" (Roys 1933:171).

In almost all modern Maya sources, winds are associated with the rain god, and in some examples, the winds appear to be servants of the rain god or are controlled by him (J. E. S. Thompson 1970: 251–67). In the Lacandon area, the wind god is set at the four cardinal points and is called the "servant of the water house" (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:271). The winds are said to bring disease. In the *Ritual of the Bacabs* the cave opening from which the semipersonified diseases were born was called the "door to the house of the Pauahtun." The concept that the homes of Pauahtun and Chac were located in the same cave is found in the Yucatec term *chun caan* 'the trunk of the sky,' which is used to refer to both the home of Chac (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:256) and to the watery place of origin of winds (Villa Rojas & Redfield 1934:165).

In the Classic Period images, God N appears as an aged deity with a "net bag" headdress (Coe 1973:14; Schele & M. Miller 1986: 54). Based on the phonetic rendering of his name glyph in the hieroglyphic text, God N has been identified as Pauahtun (Coe 1973:14). This compound is composed of a T63 *pa* glyph (a cross-hatched sign identified as a *pauo* or "net bag") (Coe 1973:14), followed by either Chac's T528 *tun* 'stone' or T548 *tun* 'drum' glyph. In some colonial examples, Pauahtun is referred to simply as Pauah (Tozzer 1941:137). This suggests that the name can be broken down into two nouns. Thus, a plausible translation of the hieroglyphic compound of Pauahtun is "the net bag of the stone (stalagmite)" or "the net bag of the drum (stalagmite)."

Why would the wind god be called "the net bag of the stalagmite"? I suggest that the wind god was called "net bag" because one of the ways that the wind was thought to be dispensed was from the "special bag" of the rain god (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:258, 265). Pauah's direct association with the stalagmite *tun* is found in the modern Maya myth that all wind comes from water. The stalagmite was the sacred source of water.

Pauahtun's name in the hieroglyphic text sometimes employs a "turtle shell" sign, and he is occasionally illustrated in the image emerging from a snail shell. The turtle and the snail, both of whom live in water, are appropriate manifestations for a wind god who also lives in water.

The Stela as a Represention of the Stalagmite

The assertion that Period Ending rituals were performed at Chac's cave brings into question the function of the Classic Maya stelae that show Period Ending events. Because a great number of the texts on Classic period stelae conclude with Period Ending dates (the end of

the tun), Long (1925:579) suggested that the Classic Maya might have erected a *tun* 'stone' (the stela) to mark tun endings. Lounsbury (cited in Justeson & Mathews 1983) has speculated that the "seating of the tun" phrase in Period Ending events actually refers to the erection of a stela. This interpretation is based on the reading of *tun* as "stone" rather than "year," and on the assumption that the Classic Maya called a stela by the term *tun* 'stone'. The suggestion that the Maya erected a stela on the occasion of the Period Ending ceremony has been widely accepted (Justeson & Mathews 1983; Schele & M. Miller 1986). However, Long's speculation stemmed from the notion that the function of the stela was to mark the passage of time. Now that the narratives found on these monuments are better understood, it is clear that these stelae are not katun markers per se, but sculptures that commemorate the successful completion of various rituals by the ruler; they include not only Period Ending events but also accessions and other events.

Direct evidence that the stela itself is not part of the Period Ending ceremony is found at Palenque. It has been noted that Palenque did not participate in what has been termed the "stela cult," since Palenque has but one small stela. Yet the Late Classic texts on the wall panels at Palenque record that the Palenque rulers performed Period Ending events. If the erection of the stela was the focus of the Period Ending event, where are Palenque's stelae? Furthermore, if the Classic stelae were erected as part of the Period Ending ritual, then the Maya would have had to produce these sculptures in advance of the actual event they illustrate. This is an unlikely scenario, since Landa's comment on the nature of the Postclassic stelae implies that these sculptures were commemorative (see discussion above).

I suggest that the Classic Maya stelae that record Period Ending events were erected to commemorate publicly the private or semiprivate cave rituals of the Period Ending ceremony *after* this ceremony had occurred. I further suggest that the shape of the stela echoes the shape of the stalagmite found in the cave where the ceremony was performed. A comparison of the Period Ending scenes illustrated on the Copan Peccary Skull and on Copan Stela D demonstrates this point. The Peccary Skull illustrates a *cauac* monster with an upright column behind it (fig. 36a). This configuration is repeated when a viewer stands in front of Stela D and its *cauac* monster "altar" (fig. 36b). These two compositions depicting a Period Ending event differ only in the arrangement of the components of the scene. While the text and the actors surround the stalagmite column in the Peccary Skull portrayal, the Period Ending text and the principal actor have been merged with the column on Stela D. I believe that Stela D was deliberately quarried in a shaft-like shape to represent the stalagmite of the cave.

The notion that the shape of the stela represents the stalagmite is difficult to prove. However, even at Copan where the carving takes on three-dimensional forms, the figure of the actor never liberates itself from the shaft of stone to become a free-standing portrait. I believe that the reason for this lies not in the artist's inability to deal with three-dimensional mass, but in the fact that the shaft of stone as a representation of the stalagmite is an intrinsic part of the scene.

The interpretation of the stela as a piece of commemorative sculpture means that the Classic Maya sites that did not erect stelae (or did not erect them on a regular basis) were, nevertheless, still performing Period Ending ceremonies.

The *Te* and *Tun* Pair

A Classic period monument from Palenque illustrates a Chac with the symbol for a tree growing from his head (frontispiece) (Greene 1967:pl. 42). He sits inside the quatrefoil cave opening on the head variant of the T528:116 *tun* 'stone' glyph. An *acante* (set-up tree or thunder tree) and *acantun* (set-up stone or thunder stone) are located in the cave of the Pauahtun in the *Ritual of the Bacabs* (Roys 1965:12).

A *te* 'tree' and a *tun* 'drum' pair are illustrated in the lower scenes of the Dresden codex New Year pages (pages 25–28) (fig. 21a–d). On each of the four pages, a deity is illustrated making a turkey "offering" as part of the New Year rituals. The offering is the sacrifice of the turkey and the burning of its blood, presumably with incense. On the first page of the Dresden New Year pages (fig. 21a), a deity makes the turkey offering to a Chac with leaves growing from his head, that is, to a *Chac te*. Located beneath the *Chac te* is the T548 Period Ending *tun* 'drum' sign. In each of the remaining Dresden New Year pages (fig. 21b–d), a deity makes the turkey offering to a tree with foliage growing from its top. The trunk of the tree is marked with the T87 tree signs and with the T528 *cauac* elements (the cluster of water drops): it is a *cauac te*. The T548 Period Ending *tun* 'drum' sign also appears at the base of these *cauac* trees. Thus, in each of these mythological locations, there is a *te* and a *tun*. The implication is that these Dresden codex New Year rituals occurred at a cave location.

At least part of the New Year ceremony did in fact occur at a cave location, because the upper scenes of the Dresden codex New Year pages illustrate the location as a cenote (the T591 sign). Proof that turkey offerings were made at cave locations is found on page 67b of the Dresden codex. The text can be paraphrased as "Chac is in his mountain; (there is) great rain; (and) turkey is its offering" (D. Stuart 1987). The image illustrates Chac seated on a *cauac* monster/cave. The implication of this scene is that Chac is in his mountain cave producing lightning and rain after having received turkey offer-

ings. Furthermore, in the *Chilam Balam of Tizimin* manuscript, it is said in regard to the New Year ceremony:

> Then the priests performed seven enchantments with the cup, affirming the magic of the mat and interpreting it into the people. Since it was the month of Pop, the priests effected the exchange of the years, and there was dancing among you as well as contests of courage. Then prayers were offered to remind the Seventeen of their responsibility. Afterward, everybody departed from the Well of the Cavern (Makemson 1951:9).

Direct evidence that the New Year ceremonies involving the turkey offerings occurred at a cave location appears in the modern New Year rituals at Jacaltenango. In 1927, La Farge and Byers (1931:114) noted that the Jacaltecos thought the first New Year ceremony was conducted by the ancestral couple *hich-mame* and *hich-mi*. This ceremony involved the sacrifice of a turkey and the burning of its blood on a high ridge of the mountain Ajul, which was reported to contain caves (La Farge & Byers 1931:20). The ridge was called *saq-ba-k'u* which means "white-?-thunderbolt."

The modern New Year rituals that imitate the mythological ceremony of the ancestral couple also involve the sacrifice of a turkey. The burning of the blood was conducted at the church, at the tree-crosses, and at the Ajul mountain. Most regrettably, La Farge and Byers did not witness the part of the ceremony that occurred on the mountain, but they noted that at Santa Eulalia, the shaman entered the sacred cave of Yalan Na as part of the New Year ceremony (La Farge & Byers 1931:179). Therefore, it is highly likely that the New Year rituals of the Dresden codex are occurring at a cave and that they involve a *te* and a *tun*.

In certain Period Ending expressions from the Classic period, there is a compound composed of the prepositional *u* 'his' prefixed to a pictograph of a tree that appears to grow out of the T528 *tun* 'stone' sign (fig. 38a, b).[16] Schele and D. Stuart (1986) suggested a reading of *u te tun* and translated this compound as "tree of stone." They further suggest that "stone tree" might have been what the Classic Maya called stelae. In their interpretation, the *tun* in *te tun* would function as an adjective. However, in Mayan compound noun formation the adjective cannot follow the noun, it must precede it. The *u te tun* compound may be a possessive noun phrase in which the first noun *te* is the possessed object and the second noun *tun* is the possessor: translated as "the tree of the stone."

If the pictographic value of *te* and *tun* are taken into consideration, then the *te tun* compound represents a tree growing from a stone or near a stone. Although trees do not grow out of stalagmites, anyone who has entered a cave in the Maya area is familiar

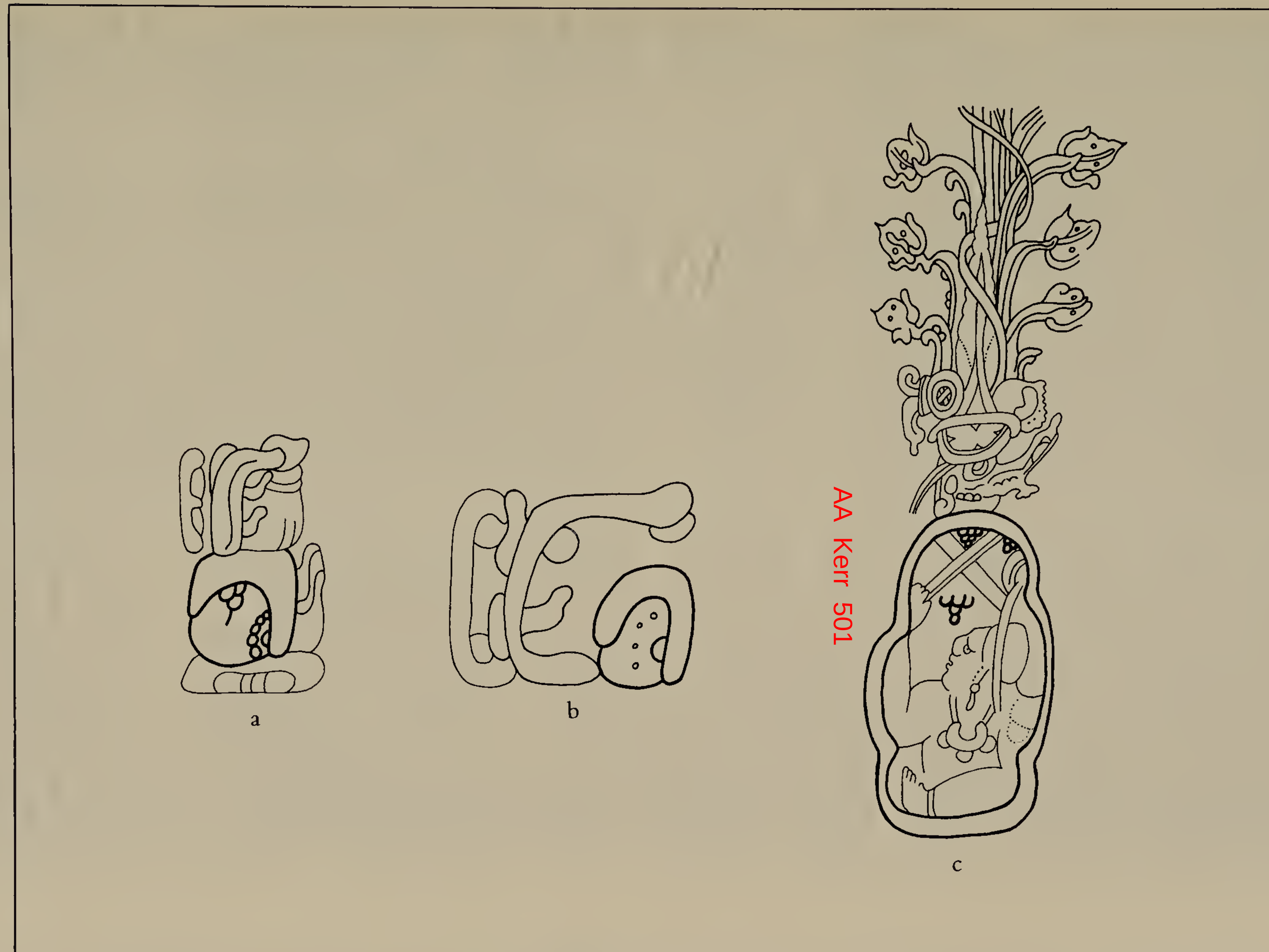


Figure 38. a. *Te tun* glyph; b. *te tun* glyph; c. *cauac* cave, Lords of the Underworld Vase 16.

with the sight of tree roots stretching down through the cave opening, intermixed with the drip-water formations on the roof and floor of the cave. The same moisture that forms drip-water formations attracts the roots of trees. Chac's cave is actually illustrated with a tree growing from its mouth on Lords of the Underworld Vase 16 (fig. 38c). The tree grows from the quatrefoil cave opening and the *cauac* elements are seen inside the cave, behind the actor. Therefore, it is reasonably certain that the *te tun* 'tree of the stone' compound is a pictograph of a tree near Chac's stone. The tree represents either the tree that grew from the mouth of Chac's cave or perhaps a tree-cross erected at the mouth by the Classic Maya.

There is evidence on Copan Stela A that the *te tun* compound represents a tree erected by the Maya. On this monument, the narrative includes a date 9.14.19.11.0 3 Ahau 18 Muan, followed by the *ts'ap* verb and the *te tun* sign. Paraphrased, it reads: "On 3 Ahau 18 Muan he thrust the tree of the stone into the ground." I infer from this that the Classic Maya erected "trees" at their caves just as the modern Maya do.

The existence of a tree-cross in the Classic Maya period is documented on Yaxchilan Lintel 2, where Bird Jaguar IV and his son Shield Jaguar II both carry crosses (fig. 16). The text on this lintel identifies these crosses as *te* 'trees', and specifically a *te* 'tree' associated with *cauac*.

The *te tun* compound also appears in standardized phrases that begin with a verb, a proper name, the Glyph B "elbow" sign, and another name. These verbs have been grouped together and called "dedication" verbs, although there is no evidence that they function as such (Schele 1989:38). The verb *ts'ap* 'to thrust something into the ground' is included in this group. Judie Maxwell, D. Stuart, and Nikolai Grube independently translated the Glyph B "elbow" compound as *u k'aba* 'its name' (cited in Schele 1989:40). When the God C *ku* 'holy or divine' sign appears in the elbow, D. Stuart reads it as "its holy name." He has identified the structure of these phrases as "verb–the proper name of the object–its holy name–the category to which the object belongs." In several cases, the *te tun* compound appears in the category position. Because Stuart interprets *te tun* as a reference to the stela, he infers that the proper name in these clauses is the name of the stela. In his interpretation, the stelae are generically called "stone trees," but each also had a specific name. I have no doubt that these phrases are giving a proper name for the *te tun* 'the tree of the stone,' but I suggest that the *te tun* is not a stela but rather the tree-cross that was erected at the cave on this occasion. Modern tree-crosses are also named (La Farge 1947:111; Vogt 1969:388), and in some cases they are called *Ch'ul Te* 'holy tree' (Guiteras-Holmes 1961:197).

Cave Paintings

Stone (in press) presented an overview of Maya cave paintings. Even including the Naj Tunich examples, the inventory for the Classic period is at present limited. Near the Tzeltal town of Bachajon, there is a mountain cave that contains a portrait of the corn god and a Classic period hieroglyphic text (J. E. S. Thompson 1975: xxxvii). Wilbur Aulie was led to another cave near Joloniel in the Chol district of Tumbala (J. E. S. Thompson 1975: xxxvi). Painted on the wall of the cave are two figures standing over a 9 Ahau day name sign. One of the figures holds a torch. The cave contains about eighty-five other hieroglyphs, which Thompson dated by style to the Early Classic around A.D. 300. Stone suggested that this date might represent a katun ending and gave two possibilities: 8.13.0.0.0 9 Ahau 3 Zac (A.D. 297) or 9.6.0.0.0 9 Ahau 3 Uayeb (A.D. 554). The next 9 Ahau katun ending date occurred on 9.19.0.0.0 9 Ahau 18 Mol (A.D. 810).

Stone argued that the acts illustrated in cave paintings were actually performed inside the cave. Her argument rests on the fact that unlike the images found in public art, the cave paintings often have no frame or locational symbols to indicate where the ritual was performed. She believes that the unframed cave scene visually unites with its surroundings. Until the accompanying hieroglyphic texts that could contain place-names have been deciphered, Stone's intriguing theory remains unproven. However, under the Joloniel painting is another symbol, which Stone interprets to represent a conflation of a 9 Ahau sign and the stepped forehead of the *cauac* monster. I infer from this symbol that the action illustrated above it did occur in a cave and quite likely this specific cave.

In an interesting paper on possible Classic Maya place-names in the hieroglyphic text, Korelstein (n.d.) noted that the Chol word *Joloniel* means *terminación* 'to finish, to end.' Given that the katun ceremony was a Period Ending event, this suggests the possibility that the town may have received its name from this function of the cave. At the nearby Chol town of Tila, which has Precolumbian settlement remains, a stela with the Period Ending date 10.0.0.0.0 7 Ahau 18 Zip (15 March, A.D. 830) was found. This means that this area did participate in Classic-era Period Ending ceremonies.

Conclusion

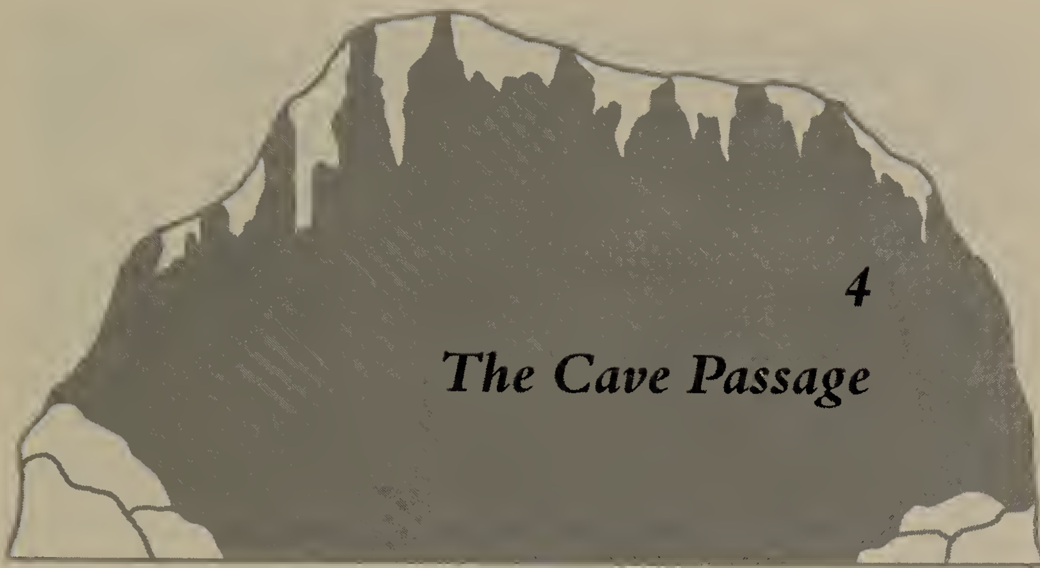
Caves were, and still are, an important feature of the Maya landscape. As the home of Chac, Bacab, Pauahtun, the moon goddess, and the ancestors, the cave was a sacred doorway both to and from the supernatural world. The elements of the cave, such as the tree, the water, and the stalagmite, played an important role in the ceremonies of the

cave. In Maya art, the cave is represented by the T591 "cenote enclosure" sign, the T683 "cave of the moon goddess" sign, the T526 "cab cave" sign associated with birth, and the T528 "cauac" sign.

T528 is a pictograph of Chac's stalagmite cave, and the T528 *tun* 'stone' compound refers to the stalagmite. On the Classic monuments, the Period Ending rituals are illustrated as having occurred at the stalagmite cave, and the text can also state this fact. The stalagmite of Chac's cave appears to be the central feature of the cave as well as a focus of the Classic-era Period Ending rituals. A tree-cross was also erected on this occasion.

I believe that the stalagmites of Chac's caves were thought by the Maya to be powerful objects. They produced rain, the single most important element in an agricultural society. The single most important food of the Maya, maize, was thought to have come originally from beneath the stalagmite. Winds originated in the water of the stalagmite. The winds could be both evil (the bearer of diseases) or beneficial (the wind that fans the flames of burning milpas). The stalagmites also produced lightning that was though to be the source of flint and obsidian from which the Maya made their tools.

The next chapter focuses on the cave passage, and on how that passage was illustrated in Maya art.



4
The Cave Passage

Once there was truth which we drew from the Serpent in ancient times.
—*The Book of the Jaguar Priest*

The Serpent

Many caves in the Maya region contain long winding tunnels of enormous size that open up into even larger caverns and then recede to a tunnel form again. Evidence of Precolumbian activity in the depths of these caves is well documented in the scholarly literature. The Maya who had the skill to enter such a sacred place, survive the inevitable encounter with the deities and ancestors, and perform the necessary ceremonies must have had a powerful influence on Maya society. A procession of torch-bearing Maya winding its way through the cave tunnel to perform a ritual is a powerful image. Several authors have described such a procession as having a snakelike movement. There are numerous examples in Maya art of an actor emerging from the jaws of a serpent. The obvious question to ask is—could these serpents represent the personification of the cave passage?

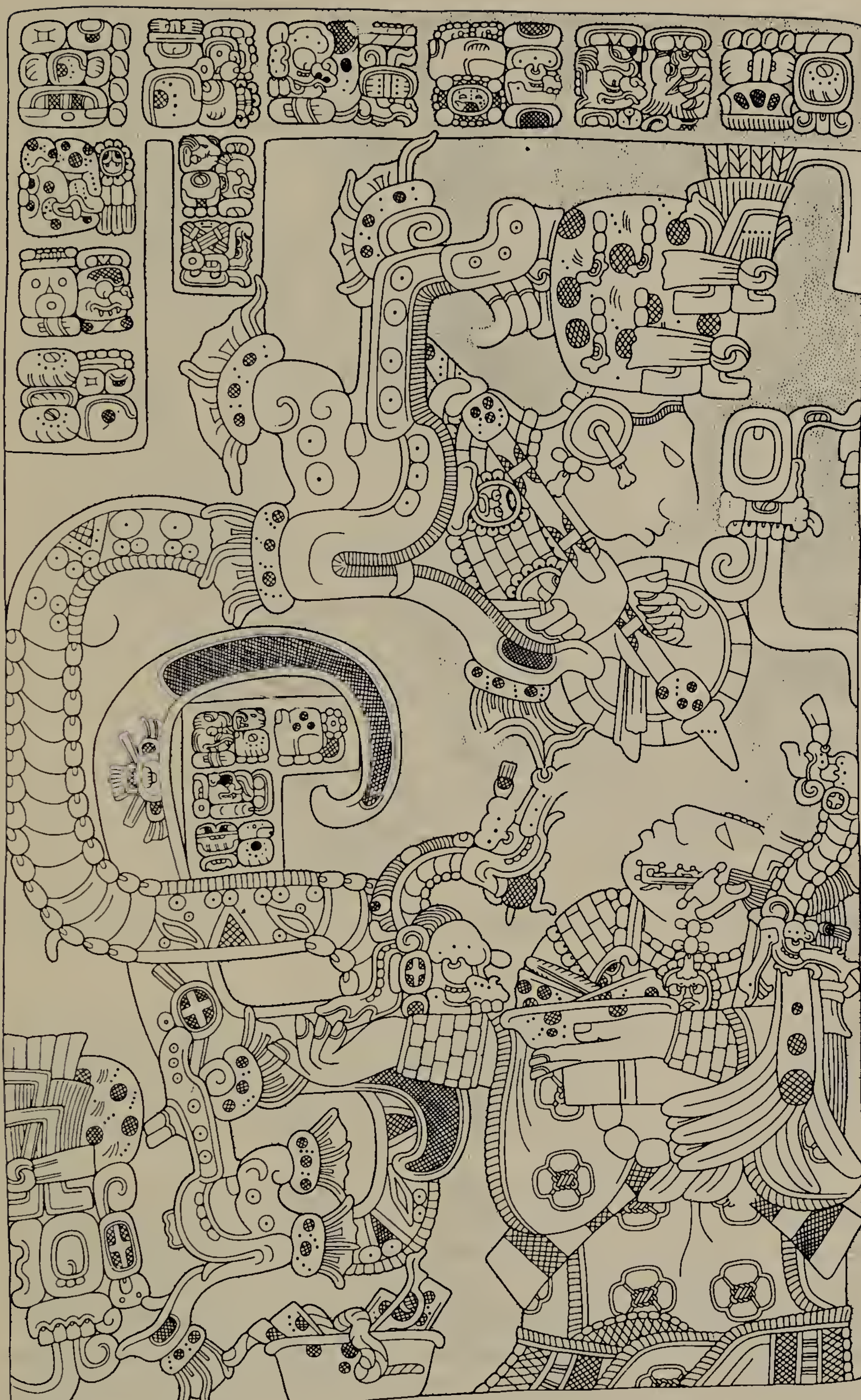
Many of the zoomorphs illustrated in Maya art have the form of a serpent. The commonest interpretation of these serpents is that they represent an "apparition" or "vision" (Kubler 1962:156). The serpents of Classic Maya art have more recently come to be called

"vision serpents" or "blood serpents" (Furst 1976; Schele & M. Miller 1986). In this section, I will first review earlier studies to demonstrate how this interpretation evolved. I will then present arguments to prove that this interpretation is not valid and to show that the serpents are, in fact, the personification of a cave passage.

On Yaxchilan Lintel 25, an actor is illustrated emerging from the upper mouth of a double-headed serpent, and he wears a deity mask (fig. 39). A deity head similar to the mask emerges from the lower mouth. A woman holding a skull and shallow bowl kneels below. The bowl contains ritual paraphernalia that includes a cord. On other Yaxchilan lintels, Proskouriakoff (1973) noted that an autosacrifice, in the form of a woman pulling a cord through her tongue, was associated with this bowl. She suggested that the Lintel 25 scene represented a bloodletting ritual by the woman that sanctified and invoked a hero of the past or an ancestor of note. Although she did not directly state this, Proskouriakoff implied that the serpent was a personification of the sky where this hero/ancestor lived. The words for serpent and sky are homonyms or near homonyms in most Mayan languages. So in Proskouriakoff's interpretation, the serpent functions as the personification of a location—that is, the serpent represents the sky.

J. E. S. Thompson (1961) suggested that the cross-hatched material in the woman's bowl was blood-spattered paper from her autosacrifice. Joralemon (1974) added to the bloodletting association of the image by identifying one of the objects in the bowl as a stingray spine used in autosacrifice for perforating (the object that looks like a feather). Although there are no known Classic sculptures that illustrate what happens next in the ritual sequence, Joralemon suggested that the alleged blood-spattered material would be presented along with the blood-soaked cord as an offering to the gods. Schele and M. Miller (1986:176) have suggested that the paper would be burned as an offering. Furst (1976) suggested that the serpent and actor illustrated on Lintel 25 were a "vision" produced by the quick blood loss of autosacrifice, perhaps in combination with drugs.

The other object in the bowl on Lintel 25 is shaped like a hook (fig. 41a). It is infixed with an *akbal* "night" sign. Although of slightly different configuration, this object has been equated with the object found in the bowl on Yaxchilan Lintels 13 and 14 (Schele & M. Miller 1986:188) (figs. 40, 41b, c). The outer shape of the Lintel 13 object (fig. 41b) is found in the Classic text as T712 (fig. 41d). This sign appears to represent a stylized fist conflated with the T617 "mirror" sign (Schele & J. Miller 1983). The mirror of T712 can have the torch of God K protruding from it (fig. 41f). In some examples, T712 is used in auxiliary verb constructions and functions as a verbal noun (Josserand, Schele & Hopkins 1985:97). It is sometimes fol-



Yaxchilan Lintel 25

Figure 39. Yaxchilan Lintel 25 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).



Yaxchilan Lintel 13

Figure 40. Yaxchilan Lintel 13 (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University).

lowed by a *ti* + *akbal* compound (fig. 41e, f). On the Tablet of the Foliated Cross, T712 is conflated with the *akbal* sign (fig. 41g). As noted in chapter 1, conflation is a device that combines two separate signs into one. Hence, the Lintel 25 object appears to be a conflation of T712 and the *akbal* sign.

Barthel (1955) suggested that, in the Madrid codex, the T667 sign (which appears to be a variant of T712) referred to the act of drawing a cord through the tongue. Josserand, Schele, and Hopkins (1985:96) suggested that the T712 sign is a pictograph of a lancet used for cutting in autosacrifice. They identified T712 with its mirror infix as an object of obsidian or flint, presumably because some Precolumbian mirrors were made of such material. They read this verb as "to bleed" from the term *tok,* which has the double meaning of "flint" and "to bleed."

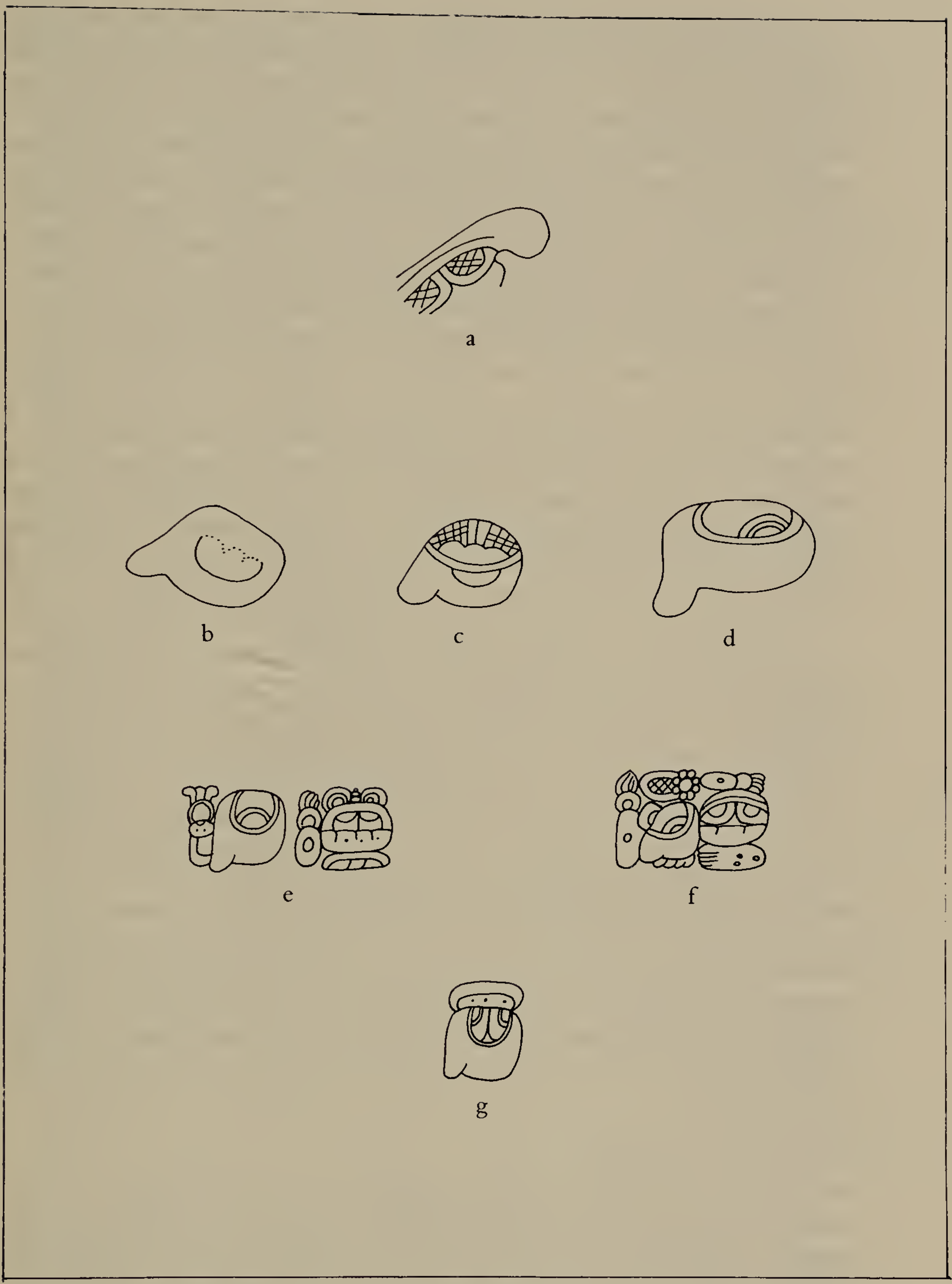


Figure 41. a. *Akbal* object, Lintel 25; b. *akbal* object, Lintel 13; c. object, Lintel 14; d. T712 sign; e. T712 sign and akbal sign; f. T712 sign conflated with torch; g. T712 conflated with *akbal*.

In several parentage statements, T712 occurs in phrases that must describe the relationship between a father and son (Schele, Mathews & Lounsbury 1977). On the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, the stingray spine perforator appears in a phrase that also must describe the relationship between a father and son. Schele (1985b, 1985d) has suggested that the stingray spine perforator is substituting for T712 in this context; this suggestion is based on her interpretation that they are both bloodletting instruments. She paraphrases this relationship clause as "Kuk (the son) is of the blood of Chaacal (the father)."

There are several problems with the identification of the conflated "T712/*akbal*" object that must be solved before a clear understanding of its function is established. Although Joralemon's perforator is held by actors in a variety of scenes, the T712 object is never held by an actor. A survey of the Classic scenes that use T712 as a verb or verbal noun shows that this verb is not specific to the acts of cutting, pulling a cord through the tongue, or bleeding. For example, on Yaxchilan Lintel 24, T712 as a verbal noun is used in the text to describe both the actions of Shield Jaguar holding a burning torch and of Lady Xoc drawing a cord through her tongue.

The fact that both the stingray spine perforator and the conflated "T712/*akbal*" object appear together in the Lintel 25 bowl means that their use in the parent relationship compound may not represent a substitution between equivalent objects. They may be used in these parentage expressions to represent completely different metaphors, which need not even be related to blood. The notion that a child is of the blood of his parents is a modern concept, and there is no evidence that the Precolumbian Maya conceived of kinship in these terms. If both T712 and the stingray spine perforator are bloodletters, why are there two types of bloodletters in the bowl? My final concern about the "T712/*akbal*" object centers on the fact that there is no explanation of why the T712 sign and the *akbal* sign appear as separate words in certain auxiliary verb constructions. I do not believe that it can be firmly concluded what the "T712/*akbal*" object represents. For this reason, I reject the notion that its presence automatically indicates blood sacrifice.

The Role of the Serpent

To understand the role of the serpent on Yaxchilan Lintel 25, we must first examine the role of serpents in Maya culture. In several images, Chac's cave is illustrated in association with a serpent. A double-headed serpent is illustrated inside a cave on Robicsek and Hales Vessel 120 (fig. 25). As noted earlier, the scene on this vessel illustrates a Chac standing in a body of water that is located inside the cave opening. The headdress of the Chac takes the form of a serpent that divides into two branches (fig. 26). The right branch terminates

in a head that is a personification of the regular form of Chac's headdress, and it is surmounted by a symbol of a leaf. The left body terminates in a head that is the front head of the double-headed serpent. Below the Chac and the water, apparently unconnected to the main body of the serpent, is the rear head of the double-headed serpent (compare this rear head with the rear head of the double-headed serpent illustrated in figure 42b). Thus, the Chac has been conflated with the double-headed serpent. On Lords of the Underworld Vase 4 (fig. 43), serpent scales are actually found on the inside of the *cauac* monster's mouth; that is, the symbol of Chac's cave is lined with serpent scales. In this scene, Chac's legs are also marked with serpent scales, which means that once again Chac has been conflated with the serpent.

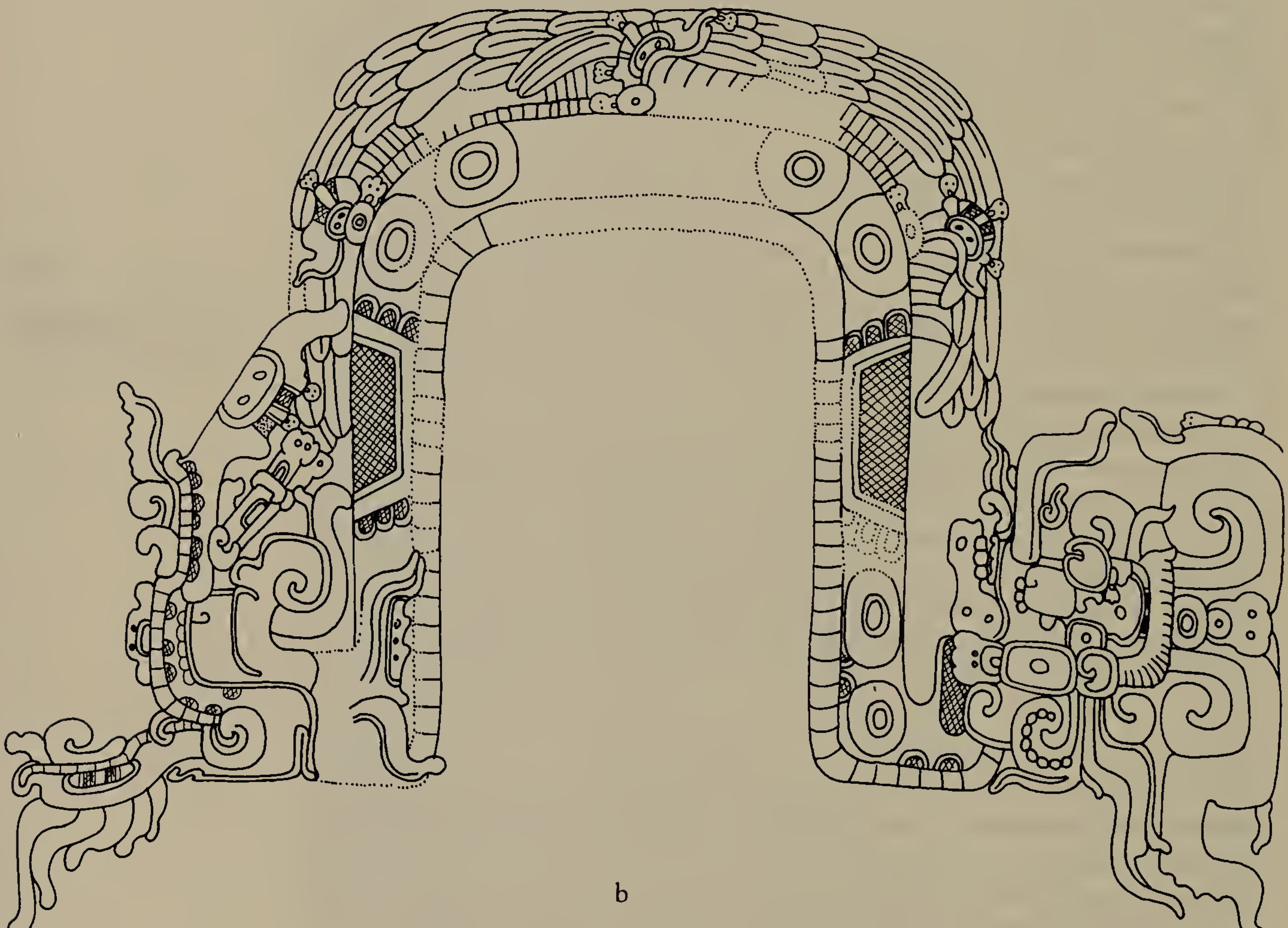
On pages 33–35 of the Dresden codex, Chac emerges from the jaws of a serpent. On pages 3–6 of the Madrid codex, Chac is illustrated standing in front of an enclosure formed by serpents. Chac's association with the serpent is also found on the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet text, where the T566 "serpent" sign precedes the Chac title in the nominal phrase of Pacal II. This "serpent" glyph includes the full figure of the serpent (fig. 44a).

On Madrid codex page 20, actors are illustrated emerging from the mouth of a toad or frog with a snake's coiled body. The full figure variant of the uinal (the calendar period of twenty days) uses a toad or frog with the belly of a snake. Toads and frogs are associated with caves across the Maya area (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:144, 1970:258). The toad is said to be the guardian of the rain god's cave (Guiteras-Holmes 1961:192).[1]

In virtually every region of the Maya area, serpents are believed to live in caves. Laughlin (1975:132) noted that "the person who enters a cave is thought liable to become the victim of a snake." La Farge (1947:128) recorded a legend about the sacred cave of Santa Eulalia in which a local woman tried to explore the cave. The deity of the cave made a river to stop her, and a serpent bound her feet with its coils. In a Yucatec myth, it was said that in the cave of Kukil Can (the King of the Serpents) the lost soul of a woman was found wrapped in the coils of a snake (E. H. Thompson 1932:82). In the Chol area, snakes guard the cave entrance of the mountain deity (Cruz Guzman, Josserand & Hopkins 1980:122). In Chorti myths, serpents are found inside caves (Fought 1972). When they issue forth, their tails create river valleys. The notion that the tail of the serpent carves out rock, which then becomes a river, can be related to the cave passages that often end in an underground river. At Flores, local legend has it that a serpent lives in the cave located at the edge of town (Rufino Ortiz, pers. comm., 1988). Ortiz pointed out an interesting visual association between a cave passage and a snake. He



a



b

Tikal Temple 4 Lintel 3

Figure 42. a. *Cauac* monster, Tikal Lintel 3, Temple IV; b. serpent, Tikal Lintel 3, Temple IV (drawings after William Coe, Jones and Satterthwaite 1982).

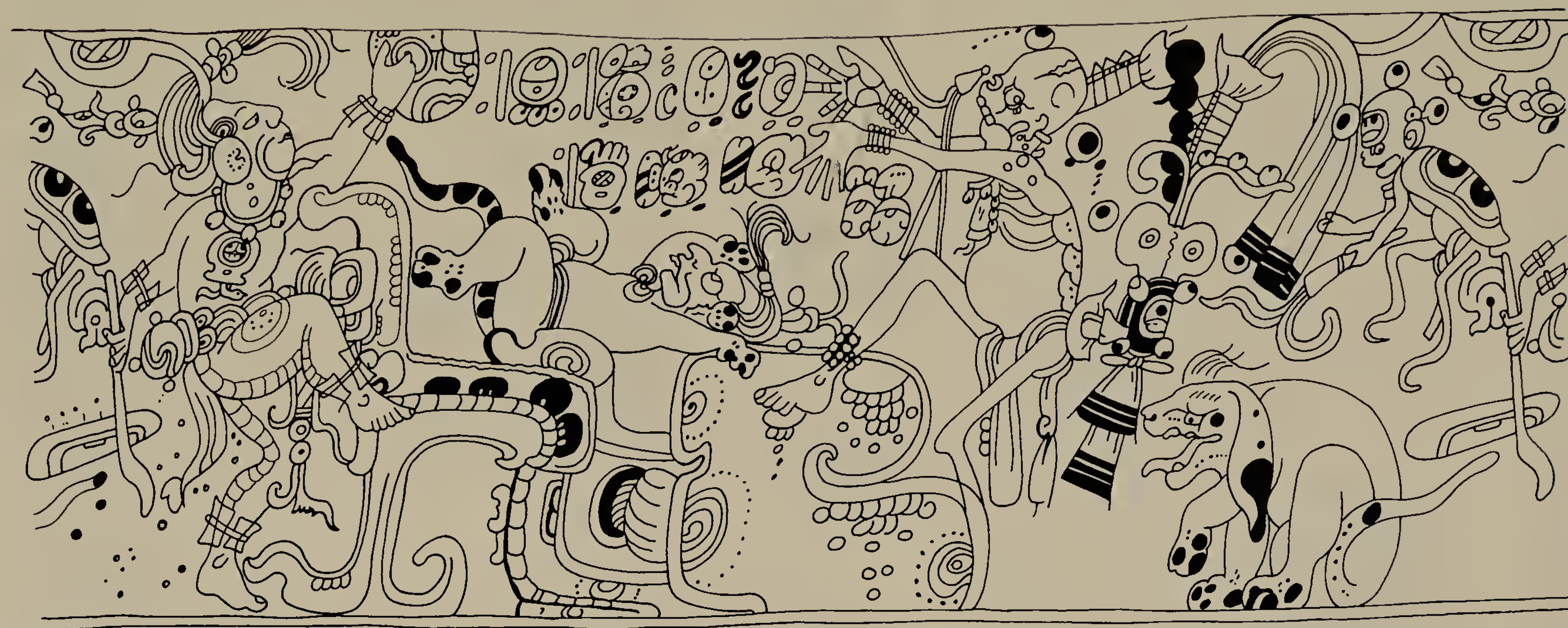


Figure 43. Lords of the Underworld Vase 4 (drawing after Justin Kerr).

AA Kerr 521

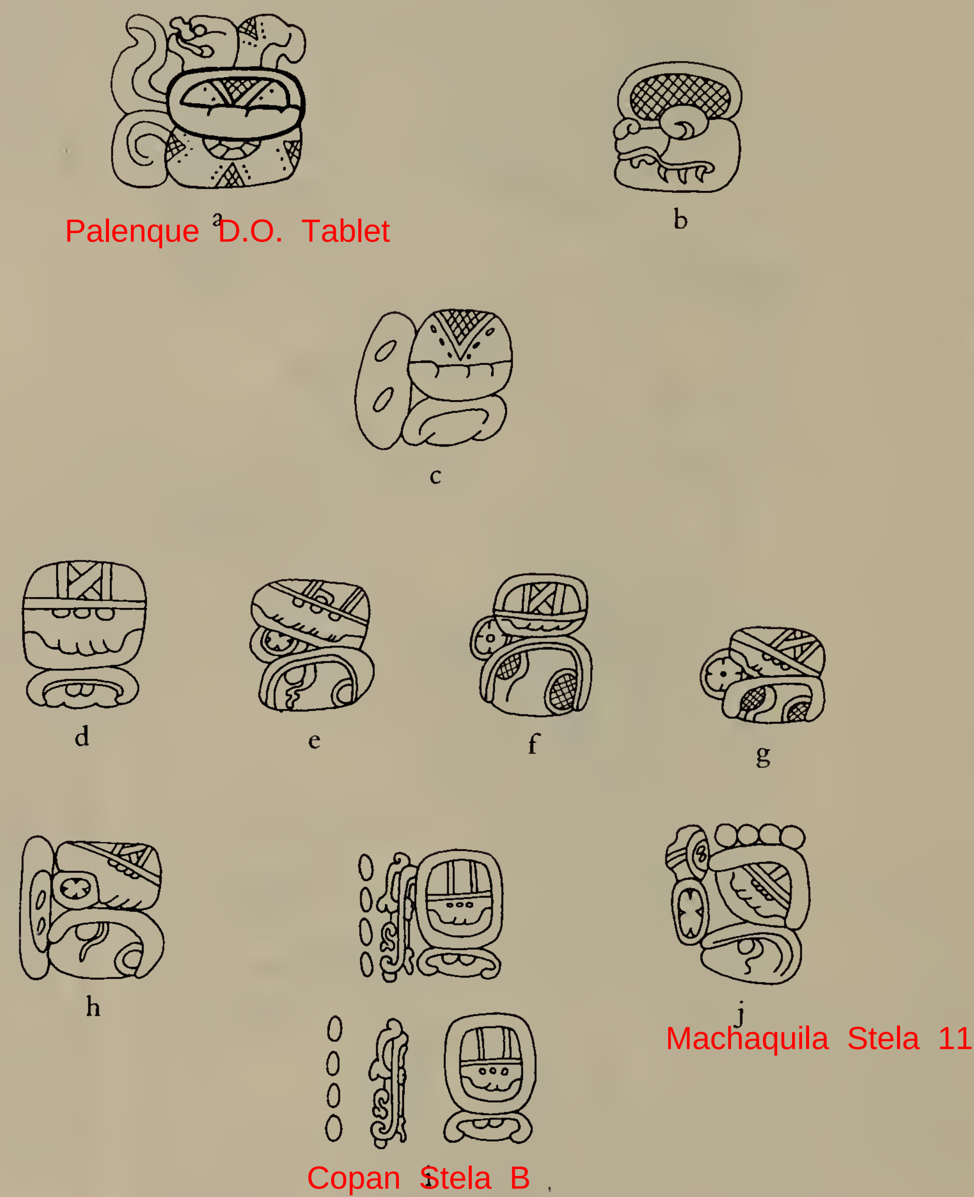


Figure 44. a. "Serpent" glyph, Dumbarton Oaks Tablet; b. Chicchan head variant; c. "north" glyph, Tablet of the Cross; d. T561 "sky" glyph; e. "dawn" glyph, Tikal Temple 4, Lintel 3; f. "dawn" glyph, Piedras Negras Stela 1; g. "dawn" glyph, Piedras Negras Lintel 3; h. Yax Pac nominal glyph, Copan Altar Q; i. "four serpent sky" glyph, Copan Stela B; j. "dawn" glyph with four superfix, Machaquila Stela 11.

noted that on the floor of the cave, the ripple effect of water had created a pattern that resembled the marks made when a snake crosses mud.

An association between the rain god and serpents appears in a variety of surviving myths. It has been noted that "a snake is the rain god's seat" (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:267). When E. H. Thompson (1932:178) removed a jaguar sculpture from the sacred cenote at Chichen Itza, one of his workers referred to it as a servant of the rain god and later referred to the rain god as the serpent god. In a Yucatec myth, the King of the Serpents had lightning in his eyes and thunder in his voice, both attributes of the rain god (E. H. Thompson 1932: 82). In Chorti mythology, the four Chicchans (rain gods) are each thought to be half-man and half-snake (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:75).

A further association between serpents and caves is found in a myth concerning rainbows. As mentioned previously, rainbows are thought to issue forth from caves and cenotes. It is also said that the snake is the companion of the rainbow (Guiteras-Holmes 1961:230, 288). Wisdom (1940:394) noted that the rainbow was thought to be the body of the Chicchan stretched across the sky.

The Serpent as a Personification of the Sky

A clue to the identity of the cave serpent is found in the *Ritual of the Bacabs* (Roys 1933). In the passages quoted below, when the word *can* 'serpent' appeared in a context that did not seem appropriate to Roys, he chose to treat the word as the near homonym *caan* 'sky', which seemed to him to make better sense. For example, when the text refers to the four divisions of the *can* 'serpent', Roys chose "sky" (*caan*) as the English translation because other colonial texts referred to the four divisions of the sky. In the quotations below, I have changed Roys's translations where necessary by substituting the correct translation of the Maya word used in the manuscript; these substitutions are enclosed in square brackets.

The incantations in the *Ritual of the Bacabs* refer to the cave of birth as a "sky":

> Then he was born. . . . His creator was Colop-u-uich-kin in the heart of the sky. (Roys 1933:19)

Because the sun enters and exits the Underworld through a cave, the cave tunnel must be the passageway of the Underworld sun; that is, the cave tunnel is the "sky" of the Underworld sun. Thus, there is a very good reason why the cave passage would be referred to as a "sky."

The same incantations from the *Ritual of the Bacabs* also refer to the cave of birth as a "serpent":

> When he was born in the heart of the [serpent] . . . Who was his creator? He created him, Colop-u-uich-kin in the heart of the [serpent]. (Roys 1965:13)

> Four were the doors to his arbor,[2] when the birth of the evil of creation occurred . . . born in the heart of the [serpent]. (Roys 1965:18)

> One day was he born; one day he stirred in his mother's womb . . . one day he is curled up at the door of his arbor . . . one day he turns about in the heart of the [serpent]. (Roys 1965:29–31)

> In the heart of the [serpent], in the heart of Metnal, during his birth, during his creation. (Roys 1965:46)

> He is to be cast behind the north [serpent], alas. This was the heating by the heat of the cave, by the heat of the water. (Roys 1965:36)

In the incantations of the Ritual of the Bacabs, the text sometimes uses both serpent and sky in parallel sentences:

> Thus the white oo-bird is his bird, the red oo-bird. So then his tree comes from the heart of the sky. . . . So then is the white oo is his bird, the red oo then. His tree comes from the heart of the [serpent]. (Roys 1965:7)

> Behind the east [serpent] . . . behind the south sky . . . behind the west [serpent] . . . behind the north [serpent]. (Roys 1965:19–20)

A second pairing of "sky" and "serpent" is found in the phrases "in the [serpent], in the clouds" and "in the sky, in the clouds" (Roys 1965:13, 16). The mist found in caves is said to be the origin of clouds. Guiteras-Holmes (1961:281) states that clouds were thought to come forth from caves.[3]

If the alternation of *can* and *caan* in the *Ritual of the Bacabs* is based on more than just a near homophonic value, then there must be some kind of semantic equivalency between the *can* 'serpent' of the cave and the *caan* 'sky' of the cave. I propose that the words for serpent and sky freely substitute in the *Ritual of the Bacabs* because they are the same thing: the serpent is the personification of the cave passage, which is, in turn, the sky of the cave.

Parallel usages of "serpent" and "sky" also occur in Classic hieroglyphic texts. The glyph for the day name *Chicchan,* which means "serpent," is a T764 pictograph of a serpent with pointed teeth (fig. 44b). In many examples, the T561 *chan* 'sky' glyph (fig. 44d) freely substitutes for the T764 *chan* 'snake head' (Houston 1984). Although Proskouriakoff (1963) suggested that the serpent was the personification of the sky, Houston argued that the substitution was based on a homophonic value only. Evidence from a Classic scene demonstrates otherwise. On a vase illustrated by Quirarte (1978:100), *cauac* mon-

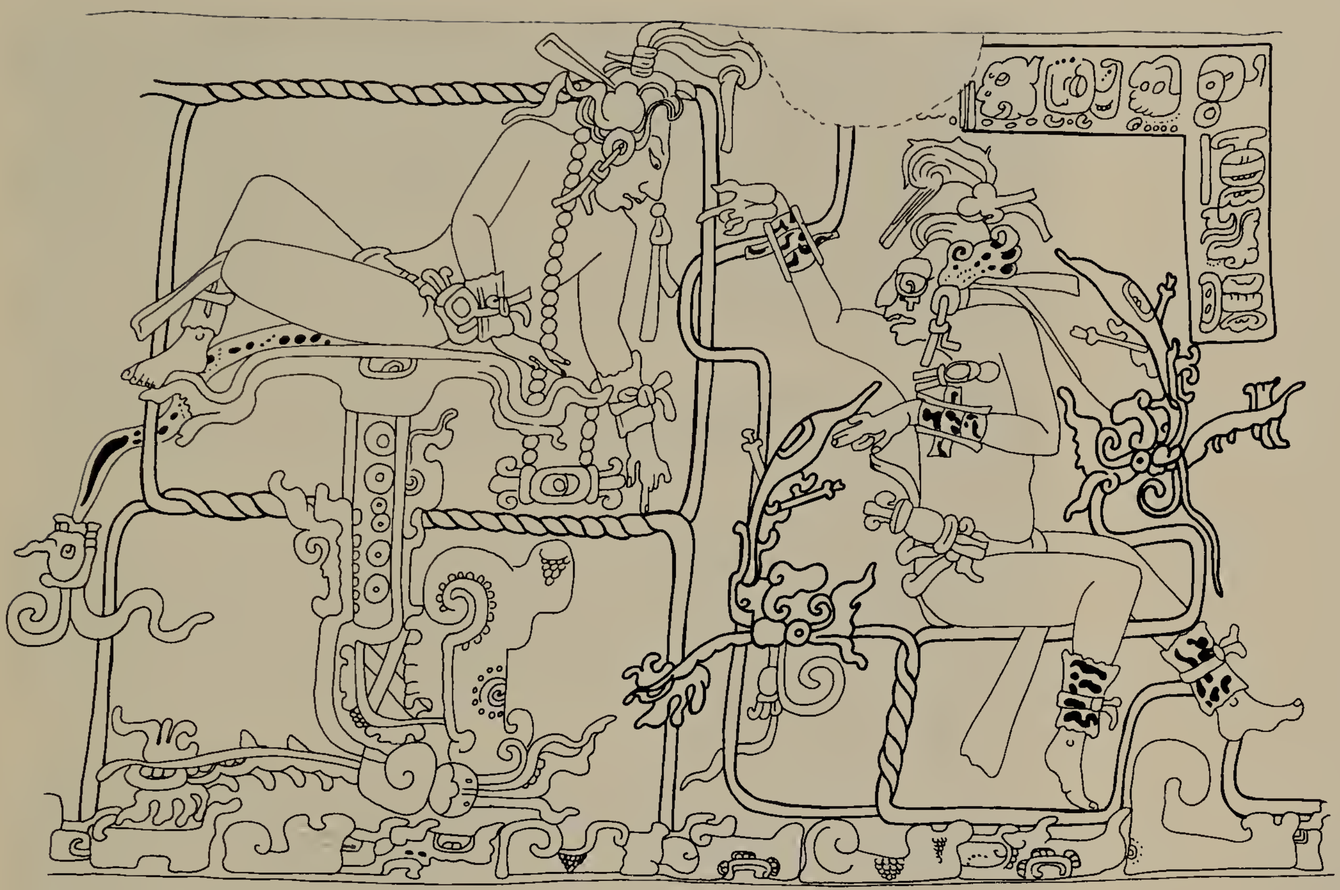


Figure 45. Detail from Quirarte vase (drawing after Justin Kerr).

sters form the baseline of the image and twisted, double-headed serpents frame the actors (fig. 45). These *cauac* monsters and serpents define the location of the action. The text states that the event is a birth, and a *na* five *chan* 'house of the five sky' compound appears as the place name of the event (Stuart & Houston 1987).[4] In other words, the text states the location is a house of the *chan* 'sky' while the image illustrates a *chan* 'serpent' inside a cave. The presence of the *cauac* monsters indicates that this "serpent/sky" is located at Chac's cave. Thus, I concur with Proskouriakoff's (1973) identification of the "serpent/sky" as a location, but I suggest further that it represents not the sky of the world but the sky of the cave passage that leads to the Underworld.

Yaxchilan Lintel 25

In virtually all examples of Maya art, there is a direct relationship between the text and the image. The text tells us the who, when, and where of the actions illustrated. Because the text is a narrative that is read in a particular order, the eye is literally led through the image.

The first sentence of the narrative on Yaxchilan Lintel 25 (fig. 39) is found in the large block of text that runs across the top of the monument and continues down the left side. In an unusual reading order, the sentence begins on the right and moves to the left (the glyphs are also reversed, in mirror-image). The sentence contains a Calendar Round date (23 October, A.D. 681) and a "fish-in-hand" verb (the only unreversed element) with Shield Jaguar as its subject. This sentence frames the actor emerging from the double-headed serpent, and by reading it, the viewer is led to the action of the actor. This framing of the action by the text has been demonstrated in chapter 2 to be a device that indicates who and what is being illustrated in the image. The emerging actor is Shield Jaguar, and his action is a "fish-in-hand" event.

Although Proskouriakoff (1973) associated this verb with bloodletting, exactly how the pictograph of a hand grasping a fish was related to autosacrifice was never established. Diane Winters (in press) has demonstrated that the common denominator of all the illustrated "fish-in-hand" events is not bloodletting but the presence of a double-headed serpent.

The narrative on Lintel 25 continues with a second sentence, which is divided into the two remaining blocks in the scene. This sentence is composed of the T757 auxiliary verb and Lady Xoc's nominal phrase (Josserand, Schele & Hopkins 1985). By reading this sentence, the viewer is taken from the action of Shield Jaguar to the action of the woman. Lady Xoc's nominal phrase contains no verbal nouns to specify her action. In the image there are two actions, Shield Jaguar performing a double-headed serpent action (associated with the "fish-in-hand" verb) and Lady Xoc performing a skull-and-bowl action (which is unnamed in the text).

From information found on other monuments, it is known that on the Calendar Round date given in this text both Shield Jaguar and Lady Xoc were alive. This means that the theme of the Lintel 25 scene cannot be ancestor recall, as suggested by Proskouriakoff. Nevertheless, Proskouriakoff was correct in thinking that the serpent was referring to the actor's location in the sky—but, given that a living human emerges from the mouth of the serpent, the serpent functions as the personification not of the sky of the world but of the sky of the cave passage.

The Lintel 25 serpent has been interpreted to represent a vision resulting from Lady Xoc's autosacrifice (Proskouriakoff 1973; Furst 1976; Schele & M. Miller 1986). I propose instead that in this scene Lady Xoc has not yet performed the bloodletting. The first piece of supporting evidence can be found in the other portraits of Lady Xoc. Lintel 25 is the central lintel from Structure 23. The three scenes found on the lintels of this structure all illustrate Lady Xoc perform-

ing rituals with Shield Jaguar on three separate dates, spanning thirty-nine years. On Lintel 24 (fig. 19), Lady Xoc pulls a thorny cord in an upward motion through her tongue. The resulting blood flow is illustrated as a scroll on her cheek. On Lintel 26 (fig. 18), Lady Xoc stands facing Shield Jaguar. Although she is not illustrated actively performing an autosacrifice, the residue of blood from an earlier autosacrifice again appears on her cheek in the form of the scroll. However, on Lintel 25 (fig. 39), Lady Xoc does not have the blood scroll, which suggests that she has not yet performed an autosacrifice.

The suggestion that the Lintel 25 scene precedes Lady Xoc's autosacrifice is at odds with the interpretation that the cross-hatched circles on the material in her bowl represent blood. On Lintel 24, however, the cord is being pulled through the tongue in an upward motion *away* from the bowl (fig. 19). The blood scroll does not fall towards the bowl, but remains on her cheek. If the cross-hatching on the material in the bowl also represents blood, then we have two different symbols for blood in the same scene. Furthermore, the cross-hatched circles are used to represent the black spots of jaguar skin on the ruler's sandals immediately beside the bowl. If we persist in the notion that this cross-hatching represents blood, we must conclude that the same symbol was also used to represent two completely different things. This kind of polyvalency for symbols seems highly unlikely, for it would confuse the information that the artist was trying to convey, rather than clarify it.

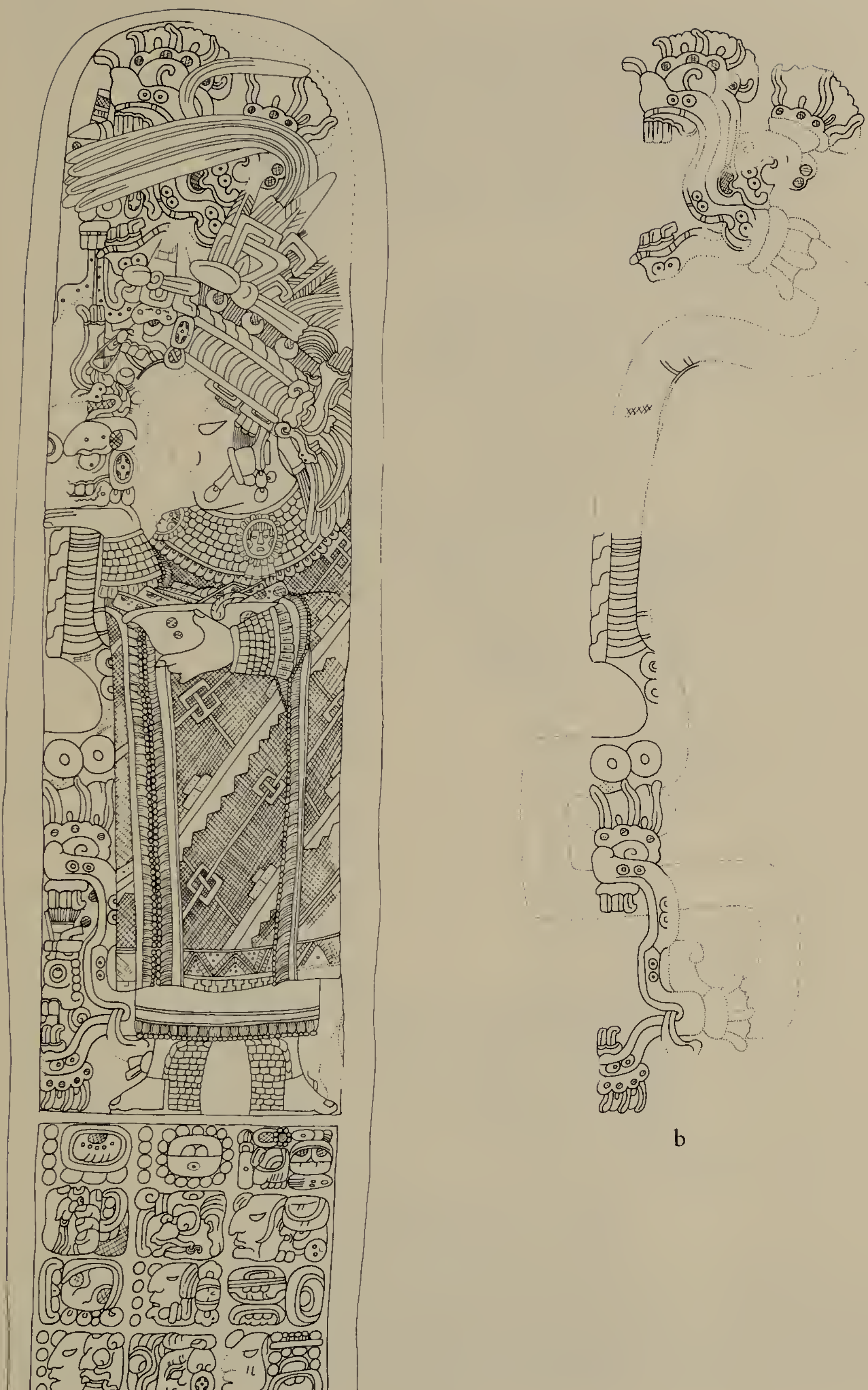
Evidence that these bowls were used to hold the ritual paraphernalia—but not to collect blood—is found in the clear examples of blood collecting on Yaxchilan Stela 1 and Stela 6, and on La Pasadita Lintel 2 (figs. 6, 7, 22). In all of these scenes, the blood is collected not in a shallow bowl but in a tall basket. It is more likely that the stacked strips of paper in the shallow bowls represent books covered in jaguar skin, such as those shown in the scenes on several Classic vases (Coe 1978:16) (fig. 46a, b). We know from colonial documents that priests consulted their codices during various rituals. Landa noted that the priest spread out his books on fresh boughs and evoked with prayers and devotions Kinich Ahau Itzamna (Tozzer 1941:153).

Yaxchilan Stela 34

Yaxchilan Stela 34 (Wilkerson 1985:541) confirms the suggestion that the scene on Lintel 25 precedes Lady Xoc's autosacrifice. The front of Stela 34 illustrates a scene that is virtually identical to Lintel 25 in theme as well as in detail. A woman stands holding a skull object and bowl (fig. 47a). This skull object is the same kind of object held by Lady Xoc on Lintel 25 (fig. 49a, b). A small serpent emerges from the head of these skulls. A double-headed serpent ap-



Figure 46. a. codice from pottery scene (drawing after Justin Kerr); b. codice from pottery scene (drawing after Persis Clarkson).



a Yaxchilan Stela 35

b

Figure 47. a. Yaxchilan Stela 34, front; b. serpent, Yaxchilan Stela 34.

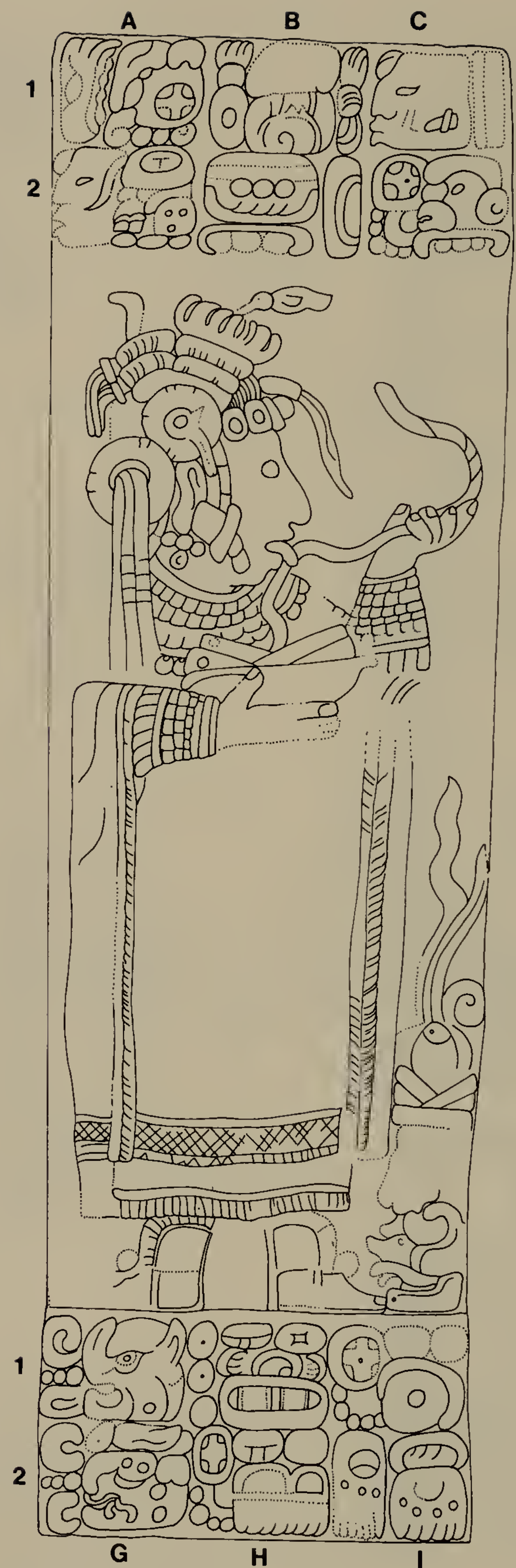


Figure 48. Yaxchilan Stela 34, back.

Yaxchilan Stela 35

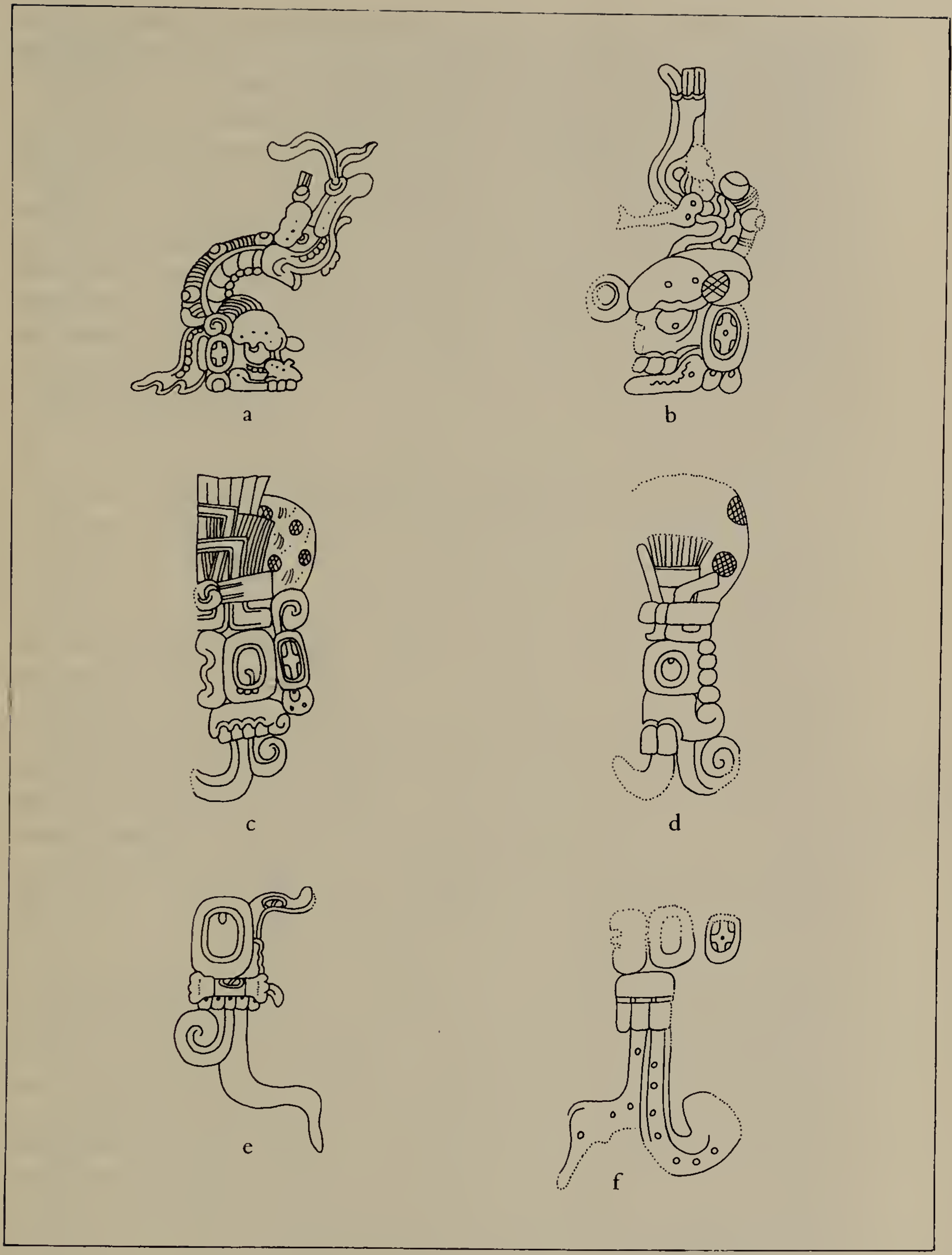


Figure 49. a. Serpent/skull, Yaxchilan Lintel 25; b. serpent/skull, Yaxchilan Stela 34; c. deity from rear head of double-headed serpent, Yaxchilan Lintel 25; d. deity from rear head of double-headed serpent, Yaxchilan Stela 34; e. deity mask from front head of double-headed serpent, Yaxchilan Lintel 25; f. deity from front head of double-headed serpent, Yaxchilan Stela 34.

pears behind the woman on Stela 34 (fig. 47a, b). The deity head in the lower mouth is the same as that of Lintel 25 (fig. 49c, d). The emerging deity in the upper head has the same features as the deity mask worn by Shield Jaguar in Lintel 25 (fig. 49e, f).

The text that explains who this woman is, what she is doing, and where she is begins with the Calendar Round date 4 Imix 4 Mol (1 July, A.D. 741) and the "fish-in-hand" verb at A2 (fig. 47a). The verb is followed by a God K glyph (at B2), which probably functions as an object. The subject has been deleted. This sentence is followed by the "*u cab* cave" phrase, with what appears to be a female deity nominal phrase (B3–A4). The *u cab* phrase is a direct statement that the "fish-in-hand" event is associated with a cave.[5] The text concludes with a final verbal phrase (B4–C4) containing the T712 sign and the *akbal* sign (C1–C3). The subject of this T712 and *akbal* event is Lady Ik Skull. Given that the "T712/*akbal*" object appears in the bowl of Lady Xoc on Lintel 25, and given that these two women are illustrated performing virtually identical actions, it can be concluded that the "T712/*akbal*" verbal phrase is directly related to the action of Lady Ik Skull involving the skull and bowl.

Following the events on the front of Stela 34, the story continues on the back (fig. 48). There is no new Calendar Round date, so we must assume that the time frame has not changed. Unfortunately the verbal noun of the *ti* construction is eroded, but the subject of this event is again Lady Ik Skull. The image illustrates Lady Ik Skull pulling a cord in an upward motion through her tongue. There is only one verb in the text, and one action (bloodletting) illustrated in the image. Thus, the entire narrative on this monument presents three verbs representing three actions. First, there is a "fish in hand/double-headed serpent" event, then a "T712/*akbal*/bowl" event, and finally an "autosacrifice" event by Lady Ik Skull.

Evidence of the existence of a concept of ancestor recall is found in the modern highland Maya rituals in which people petition their ancestors at a cave. In the Tzotzil area, ancestors are said to be capable of returning and speaking to their descendants (Guiteras-Holmes 1961:33). The cave as a place for a "vision quest" was discussed by Macleod and Puleston (1978). The *Chilam Balam of Tizimin* says that "wonderful nocturnal visions" were produced in the cave (Makemson 1951:22). It is not my intention to deny Furst's (1976) notion that Maya rituals included "vision quests." However, the serpents illustrated on Lintel 25 and Stela 34 cannot represent "visions" resulting from blood loss, because the bloodletting has not yet occurred. Instead, just like the *cauac* monsters, these serpents represent the location of the actions being performed. The date on Lintel 25 is recorded on other monuments as the accession date of Shield Jaguar I. Like

those of the rulers of Palenque, this accession ritual is also occurring at a cave.

In discussing the double-headed serpent on Yaxchilan Lintel 25, John Pohl (pers. comm., 1987) suggested that while the front head of the serpent represented the cave opening, the tail of the serpent represented an inner cavern of the cave (fig. 39). Thus Lintel 25 represents Lady Xoc preparing for a blood sacrifice in the inner recesses of a cave, while Shield Jaguar emerges from the cave entrance. Following Pohl's suggestion, the front of Stela 34 illustrates Lady Ik Skull in the recesses of a cave, preparing for an autosacrifice, while the back illustrates the actual bloodletting. Pohl also made the intriguing suggestion that the undulations of the serpent represent the configuration of a specific cave tunnel.

The Parallel Contexts of the Serpent and the T561 "Sky" Sign

In light of the identification of the serpent as the personification of the sky of the cave passage, let us now examine the role of the various manifestations of the serpent and the "sky" sign in Classic Maya art.

The T561 "Sky" Sign as the Sky of the Cave

The T561 "sky" sign is found in a pictograph used to indicate a Distance Number of one day (Seler 1902–3:I:173) (fig. 44e). This glyph is composed of the pictograph of the T526 "*cab* cave" with a T561 "sky" sign on top. A *kin* 'sun' sign is wedged between these two signs. Because *cab* can have the meaning of "earth" in Yucatec, this glyph was interpreted as a pictograph of the sun rising from the earth into the sky. However, on an example of this "dawn" glyph from Piedras Negras, the sun emerges not vertically, like the real sun, but horizontally between the T561 "sky" and T526 "*cab* cave" signs (fig. 44f, g). This suggests that the T561 "sky" sign does not function as the sky of the world but rather as the sky of the cave from which the sun emerges after his sojourn in the Underworld. Evidence for this interpretation is found in a variation of the "dawn" pictograph as found in the nominal phrase of a Copan ruler (fig. 44h). This nominal glyph is composed of a *yax* sign prefixed to the "dawn" glyph. Various phonetic substitutions for this pictograph have been read as Yax Pac (Lounsbury, pers. comm., 1981). *Yax* means "first" or "great," and *pac* has the meaning of "to become light" or "to brighten." The first light of day is not the rising sun, but dawn, when the sun is still below the horizon—that is, when the sun is still inside the cave. In the pictograph of Yax Pac's nominal glyph, the sun

has not yet emerged from the enclosure formed by the "sky" and the "*cab* cave."

The "Serpent/Sky" Band as the Cave Passageway

T561 sky bands often form niches in which rulers sit; they can also act as bases, platforms, or thrones for actors, or they may frame scenes (Carlson & Landis 1985). These sky bands are often conflated with a serpent. On Quirigua Stela I, an actor sits on a *cauac* monster, and a sky band forms an enclosure around him. Sky bands appear above *cauac* monsters on Lords of the Underworld Vase 14 (Coe 1978:98). In the Paris codex, deities sit on sky bands during the katun ceremonies (Taube 1987). These sky bands have been identified as the "cosmic border framing the Maya world" (Carlson & Landis 1985:115). The interpretation of the T561 "sky" glyph as the sky of the cave passage brings into question this celestial interpretation of

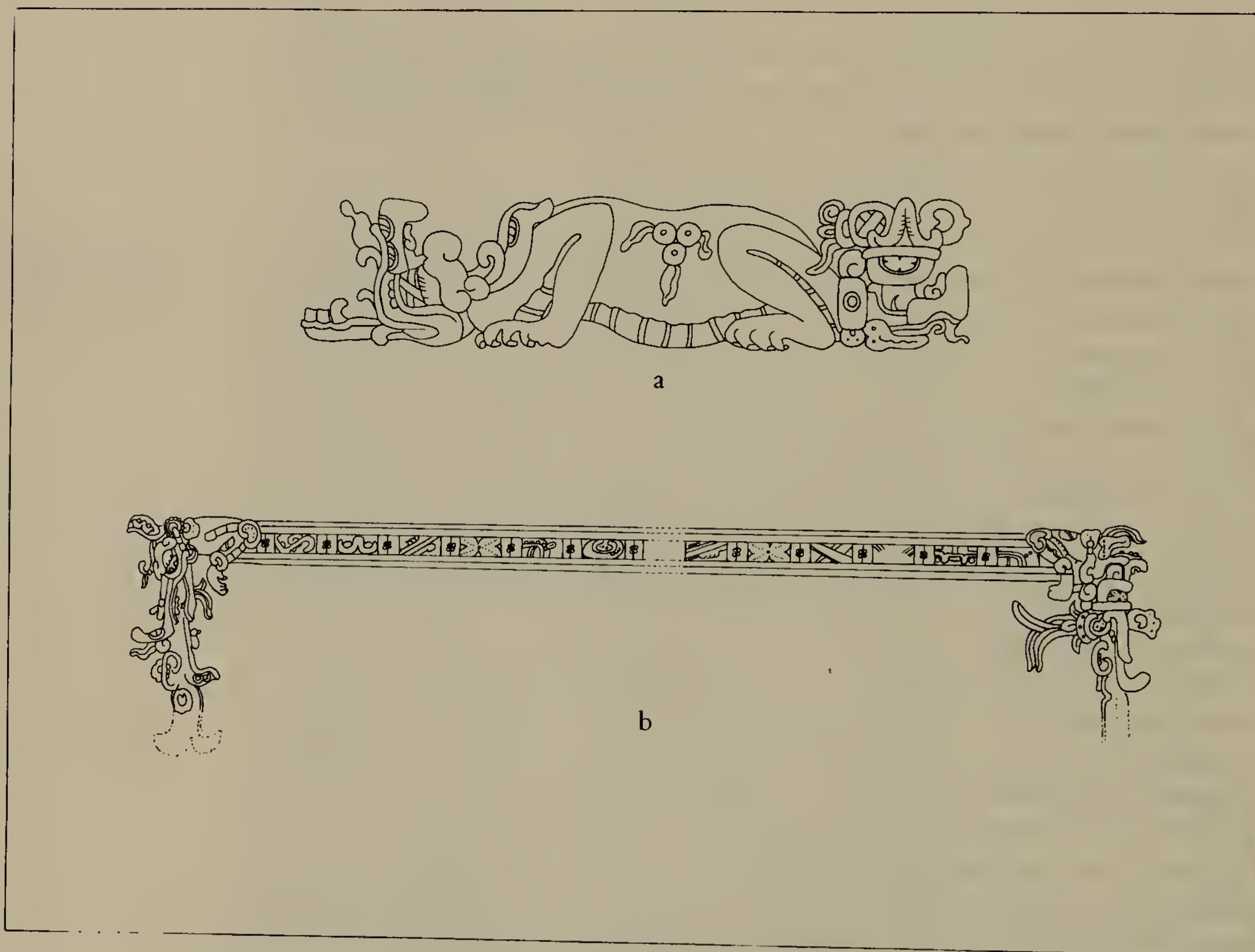
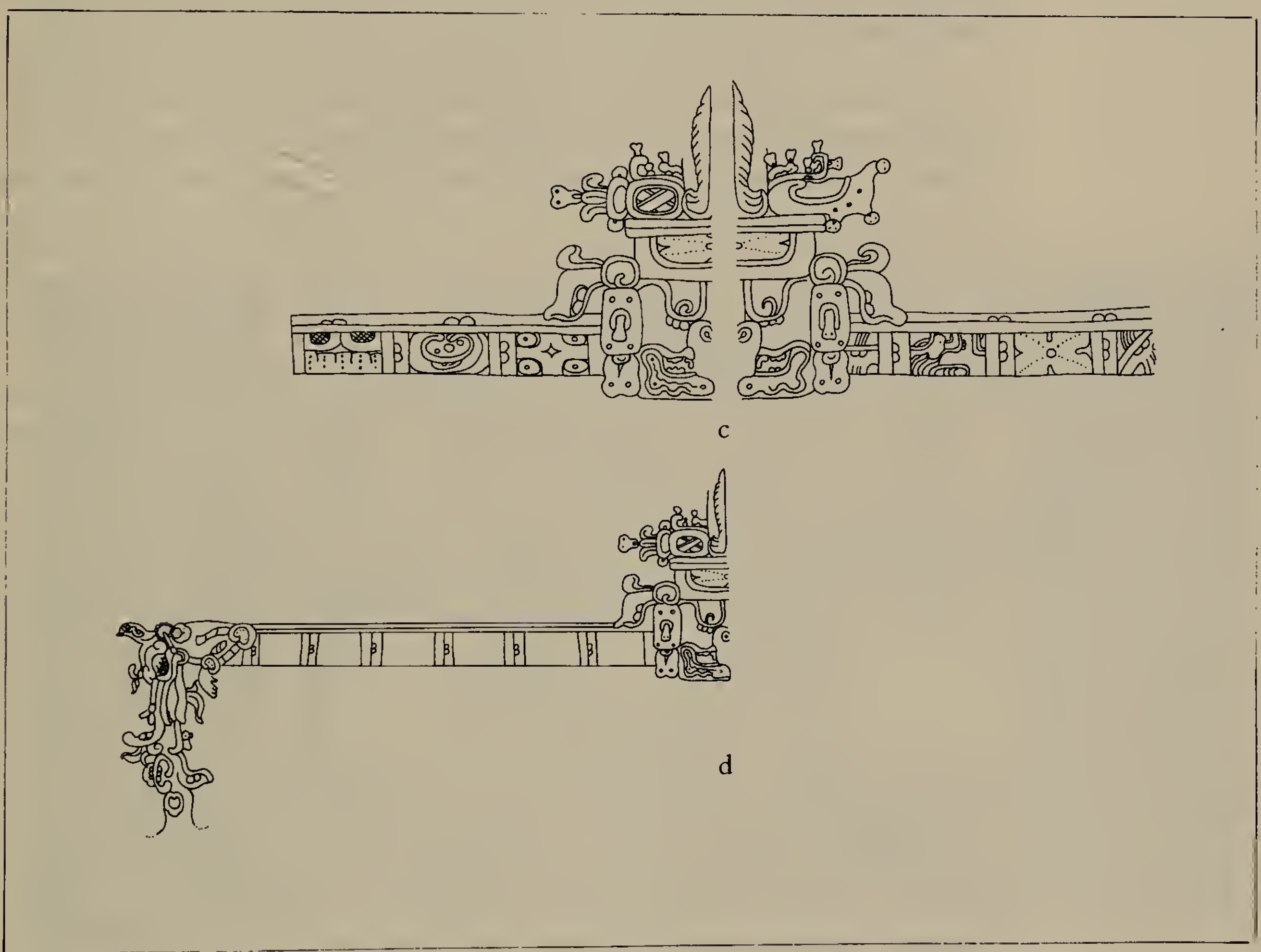


Figure 50. a. Venus/Sun monster, Copan (drawing after Alfred Maudslay 1889–1902); b. Venus/Sun monster, Palenque House E (drawing after Merle Greene Robertson); c. rear head of Venus/

these sky bands. The fact that living rulers are illustrated sitting and standing on platforms and thrones composed of sky bands suggests that the sky band is defining not the sky of the world, but the sky or passageway of the cave. Like the *cauac* monsters, the T561 sky bands are symbolizing actual terrestrial locations. Hence, the passageway of the cave can be illustrated in a band or tunnel-like form, or it can be animated in the form of a serpent, or it can be represented by a combination of these two forms.

The "Serpent/Sky" Bands and the Venus/Sun Monster

There is a zoomorph in Maya art that has been referred to by a wide variety of names, such as the "Cosmic Monster," the "Bicephalic Monster," and the "Celestial Monster." This zoomorph has a long-snouted front head, usually marked with Venus signs (Spinden 1913; Kubler 1969; J. E. S. Thompson 1970; Robertson 1974) (fig. 50a).

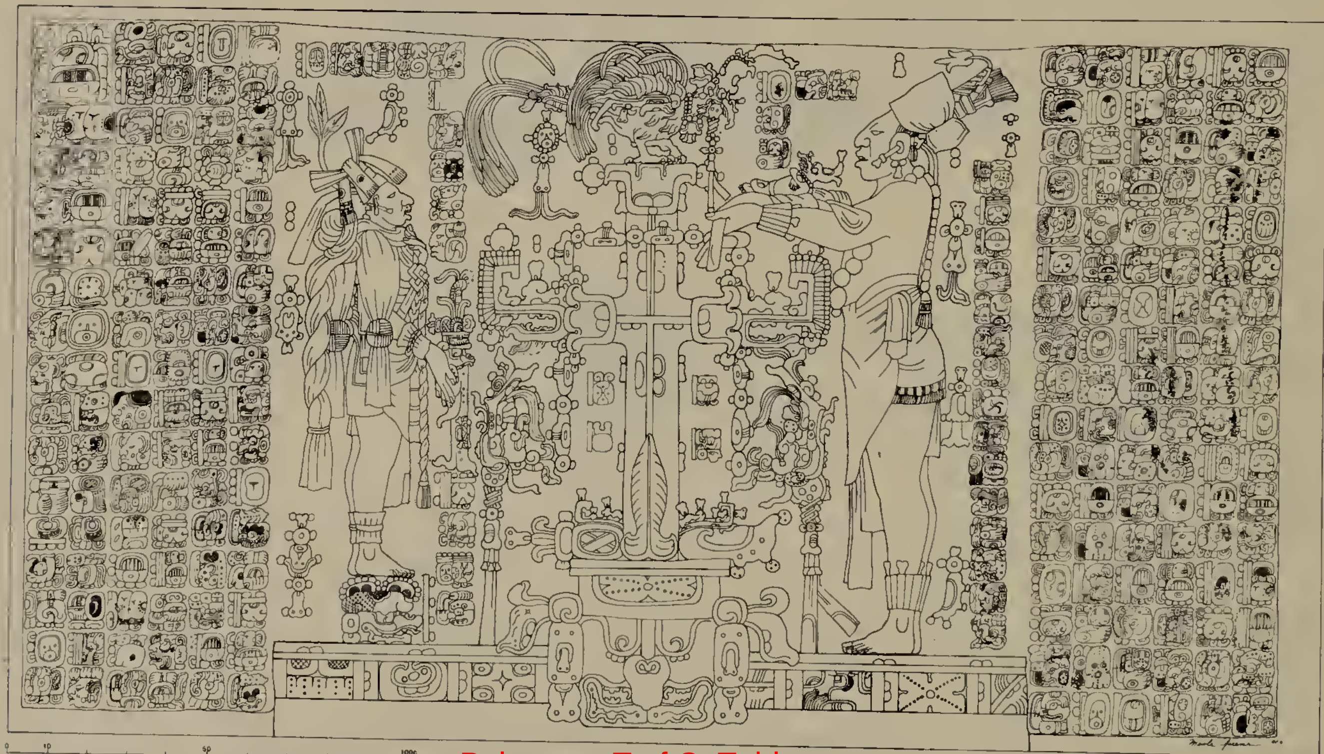


Sun monster, Tablet of the Cross (drawing after Merle Greene Robertson); d. composite of Venus/Sun monster.

The rear head is composed of a partially skeletal head with a bowl on top. The bowl is infixed with the *kin* glyph. Three objects—a crossed band, a shell, and a stingray spine—appear in the bowl. The body, which is reptilian, has deer hoofs or claws for feet and is sometimes marked with *cauac* elements. Often the body itself is replaced with a sky band (fig. 50b). I will refer to this zoomorph as the Venus/Sun monster, based on the Venus and sun elements found in the heads at either end.

In many examples of the Venus/Sun monster, only the body and one head are illustrated. Such is the case on the Tablet of the Cross, where the rear head appears at the base of a stylized ceiba tree (fig. 51). Carlson and Landis (1985) have demonstrated that the view of this rear head is, in fact, two profile views facing each other and that the sky bands on either side are the bodies of two zoomorphs (fig. 50c). The front heads of the zoomorphs would be found at the opposite ends of the sky band, but the artist chose to exclude them (fig. 50d). Nevertheless, the viewer understands this to be the Venus/Sun monster.

The Venus/Sun monster is found in association with cave symbols in several scenes. It is conflated with a *cauac* monster on the altar of Copan Stela M. On Piedras Negras Stelae 6, 11, 14, and 25, the Venus/Sun monster forms a niche in which various rulers sit on the



Palenque T of C Tablet

Figure 51. Tablet of the Cross (drawing courtesy Merle Greene Robertson).

occasion of Period Ending events (Maler 1901–3). A bird deity sits on top of these niches. The body of the monster forms an enclosure that Benson (1985:185) suggested is the representation of a symbolic cave. On Lords of the Underworld Vase 16, the rear head of the Venus/Sun monster is found above the quatrefoil cave opening (fig. 38c).

At Palenque, on the Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus Lid, Pacal is illustrated at death, falling into the skeletal jaws of a cave "monster" (fig. 23). In front of Pacal is the rear head of the Venus/Sun monster. Behind Pacal is a stylized yaxche or ceiba tree with the Classic Maya "principal bird deity" on top. A Lacandon myth has the setting sun entering the Underworld each evening by climbing down the trunks of trees and through the roots. The sun then journeys through the Underworld and reemerges at dawn (Soustelle 1936:188; J. E. S. Thompson 1950:71). The dead Pacal appears to be following the same path into the Underworld as the dying setting sun: down the trunk of a tree and into the cave. The sarcophagus lid is framed on the top and bottom with a band of quatrefoil cave openings and on the sides by sky bands, the cave passage.

On Robicsek and Hales Vessel 120 (fig. 25), the Venus/Sun monster frames the upper border of the plate. Although most of the monster is out of view, its front and rear heads appear on the right and left sides, respectively (fig. 26). The "bird deity" hovers below the area where the body would be. As noted in the discussion of the "*cab* cave," the upper text records the event as the first appearance of Venus as evening star, using the "cleft T526 *cab* cave" verb.

The Venus/Sun monster must be associated with the eastern or western horizon, for Venus appears only on these horizons. The substitution of a sky band for the Venus/Sun monster's body suggests that the Venus/Sun monster is the personification of the "cave path" that Venus takes into and out of the Underworld. The identification of Venus with Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, may be based on this concept. It is of some interest that the surviving name for Venus in Tzeltal is Canan Chul Chan 'the Guardian of the Holy Serpent/Sky' (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:251).

The Serpent/Sky Ceremonial Bar and the Birth Metaphor

One of the commonest occurrences of the serpent/sky band is as a ceremonial object in the image. In illustrations of the Period Ending events, the ruler is shown holding a double-headed serpent or sky band or a conflation of these two forms. Emerging from the mouths of these serpent/sky ceremonial bars are deities. Given that deities were thought to be born from caves, I suggest that the deities shown emerging from the symbol of the cave passage are being born. And the reason the ruler is illustrated holding a serpent/sky ceremonial

bar is to show that the bloodletting rite he performed on the occasion of the Period Ending brought the gods to life.

There is direct evidence for a birth theme in the illustrations of the Period Ending event on Dos Pilas Stela 25. The text states that the Period Ending ritual of the ruler resulted in the "birth" of a pair of deities (D. Stuart 1982, 1988). The Dos Pilas text uses the same "upended frog" verb that is used to express the birth of humans in other Classic texts. The location of the Dos Pilas birth is called the "*cab* cave" (*u cab*) of the ruler. This is in accord with the previously discussed information that places the rituals of the Period Ending at a cave. It also fits with the pan-Mesoamerican metaphor that relates the cave to birth. A *cab* cave is most appropriate because the "*cab* cave" sign is used in the birth verb for the Palenque Triad of deities. Thus we have evidence for a birth theme in both the texts and the images of the Period Ending events.[6]

Another common illustration of the Period Ending events shows the ruler performing an autosacrifice, the hand-scattering event, in the form of penis perforation. A direct association between penis perforation and the birth of a deity is found in the substitution patterns of two titles used in the nominal phrases of rulers. One title is composed of a deity hanging from the quatrefoil cave opening—the deity is emerging (being born) from the cave (fig. 4g). In an example of this title on Naranjo Stela 13, at A9, the T528 pictograph of Chac's cave substitutes for the quatrefoil cave opening. The deity has the face of Chac. Most interestingly, the "corn kernel" element from Chac's cave emanates from his head. This Chac-like deity has been nicknamed the "dangle god" because he hangs on something like an umbilical cord, which is attached to the groin area of rulers. On Caracol Stela 4, the Chac/dangle god actually hangs between the legs of the ruler. The title that substitutes for this Chac/dangle god is composed of a pictograph of a slashed penis and scrotum (D. Stuart cited in Schele & M. Miller 1986:326) (fig. 4h). The interchangeability of these two glyphs in the ruler's titles reflects the direct association between the birth of a Chac-like deity and penis perforation. These titles are used in the context of Period Ending autosacrifices and *u cab* phrases, which further indicates an association with the cave. More important, both titles are always preceded by a "sky" title.

Further evidence that penis perforation is associated with birth is found in the *Ritual of the Bacabs:*

> four are those to his acantun, where his birth occurred. Four splotches of blood, four splotches of clotted blood are behind the acantun, the acante. Four were their flint lancets [the penis perforators]; four were their male genitals; four were their arbors, when his birth occurred. (Roys 1965:12)

> One day was he born, one day he stirred in his mother's womb. Who was his mother? The offspring of Ix Hun-ye-ta (point of the lancet), Ix Hun-ye-ton (point of the male genitals). (Roys 1965:29)

Therefore, it is highly likely that the Period Ending rite of auto-sacrifice by the ruler that resulted in the birth of deities was also illustrated in the images as deities emerging from the serpent ceremonial bar, the symbol of the cave passage.[7]

The Akbal Sign as the Night Sky

Another association between the serpent of the cave and the sky of the cave is found in the sign for the day name *Akbal*. This sign is composed of a pictograph of a segment of a serpent's body (Beyer 1928). *Akbal* (or its cognates) means "night" in a variety of Maya languages (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:73). Why would the serpent be used to express "night"? The cave passage is not only the sky of the Underworld sun, but also the sky where it is always night. An interesting quotation from J. E. S. Thompson (1950:73) associates Akbal with the cave:

> Uotan or Watan, which replaces Akbal in the Chuh, Jacalteca, Santa Eulalia, and supposedly Tzeltal [calendrical] lists, is said by Nunez de la Vega to have been the tribal ancestor who divided the land among the people. He put tapirs and a great treasure of hieroglyphic material and jades in a dark house which he formed by blowing. This house was identified with a cave near Huehuetan, on the Pacific coast of Chiapas. Uotan was much venerated and in some provinces was considered to be the heart of the people. He was the lord of the hollow wooden drum, the *teponaztle* or *tunkul*.

The Serpent and the Umbilical Cord

Tarn and Prechtel (1986:184) recorded that in Maya thought "the womb of a woman is a coiled snake." In fact, umbilical cords do take on the appearance of a twisted cord and often emerge from women in a twisted state (William Louie, M.D., pers. comm., 1988). The serpents in a vase published by Quirarte (1978) twist into rope-like configurations that mimic the appearance of an umbilical cord (A. Miller 1974).

There is evidence for an association between serpents and umbilical cords on Yaxchilan Lintel 13 (fig. 40). In this scene, an actor emerges from the mouth of the serpent, which passes under the arm and across the belly of the left actor. The text opens with a Calendar Round, the birth verb, and the name of Shield Jaguar II (at A1–A4 and B1). The lower left text (C1–D6) names the left actor as Lady Great Skull and states her action. The right text (E1–FI) names the right actor as Bird Jaguar IV and states his action. As noted on Stela

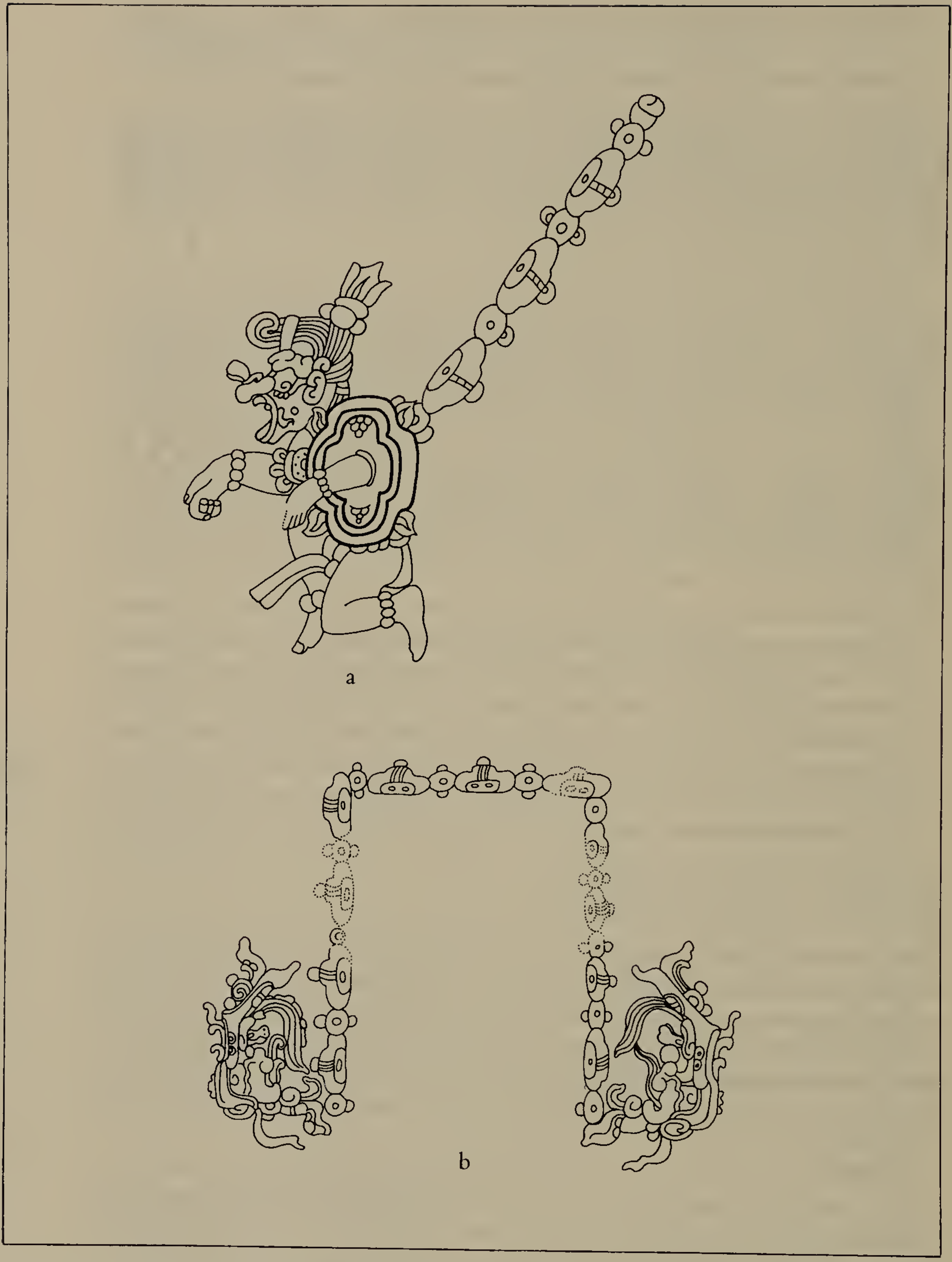


Figure 52. a. Deity hanging from quatrefoil opening, Temple of the Cross Jambs; b. double-headed serpent, Tablet of the Cross.

7, these two actors are the parents of Shield Jaguar II. The reading of the sentence concerning the birth of Shield Jaguar (A1–B1) leads the viewer to the action between Lady Great Skull and the emerging actor. As the lower left text identifies Lady Great Skull and her action, this upper text should identify and explain the actor emerging from the serpent. D. Stuart (1982) has identified this actor as her child, Shield Jaguar II, on the occasion of his birth. The serpent marks the "path" that Shield Jaguar II takes from his mother's womb. In reality, this path would be marked by the umbilical cord. In the birth metaphor of the cave, the path is marked by the double-headed serpent. This example demonstrates that within the birth metaphor, the serpent can personify an umbilical cord.[8]

The birth verb used in Classic texts is the same for both deities and humans. This suggests that in the scenes that feature the birth of a deity there should be symbols that can relate to human birth. On the Temple of the Cross Jambs, Chan Bahlum is illustrated in the process of a penis perforation. What appears to be an umbilical cord hangs from Chan Bahlum's groin area and terminates at a quatrefoil cave opening. A baby deity hangs from the opening (fig. 52a). In this scene, the autosacrifice of the ruler is visually associated with the birth of a deity. The umbilical cord is formed by alternating *yax* and "circle" elements. On the Tablet of the Cross, the body of the double-headed serpent in the tree is formed by the same *yax* and "circle" elements (fig. 52b). As will be demonstrated below, this tree is located at the cave of GI's birth. This serpent/umbilical cord is reminiscent of a Mam birth ritual in which the umbilical cord of a baby boy is taken and placed in the branches of a tree on a mountain (Oakes 1951a:109).

On Yaxchilan Lintel 13, the mother and father of Shield Jaguar II hold bloodletting instruments. The natural bloodletting that occurs at birth is the cutting of the umbilical cord. There is ample evidence in the literature that the cutting of the umbilical cord was an important part of the birth event throughout the Maya area.[9] Since the birth of deities is modeled after human birth, it seems highly likely that the rituals associated with the birth of deities replicated the rituals associated with human birth. If we apply a human model to the birth of the deity on the Temple of the Cross Jambs, the penis perforation of Chan Bahlum would appear to be related to the cutting of the umbilical cord. On a visual level, umbilical cords and penises both bleed profusely when cut (William Louie M.D., pers. comm., 1988).

Further evidence that, within the birth metaphor, the penis perforation of the ruler may represent the symbolic cutting of the umbilical cord is found in the role the ruler plays. The commonest title of Classic rulers is Bacab, and in a birth passage from the *Ritual of the*

Bacabs one of the roles of the Bacab is to cut the umbilical cord (Roys 1965:40; A. Miller 1974).[10]

Conclusion

I have made a case for the notion that some of the serpents found in Maya art represent the personification of a cave tunnel or passageway. This notion is supported not only by the contexts in which these serpents are found in the image and text but also by the role that serpents play in the ethnohistorical sources. In the following chapter, I will examine the way in which the serpent/cave passage is combined with the other cave symbols that I identified in chapter 3.

5

Caves Associated with the Palenque Triad

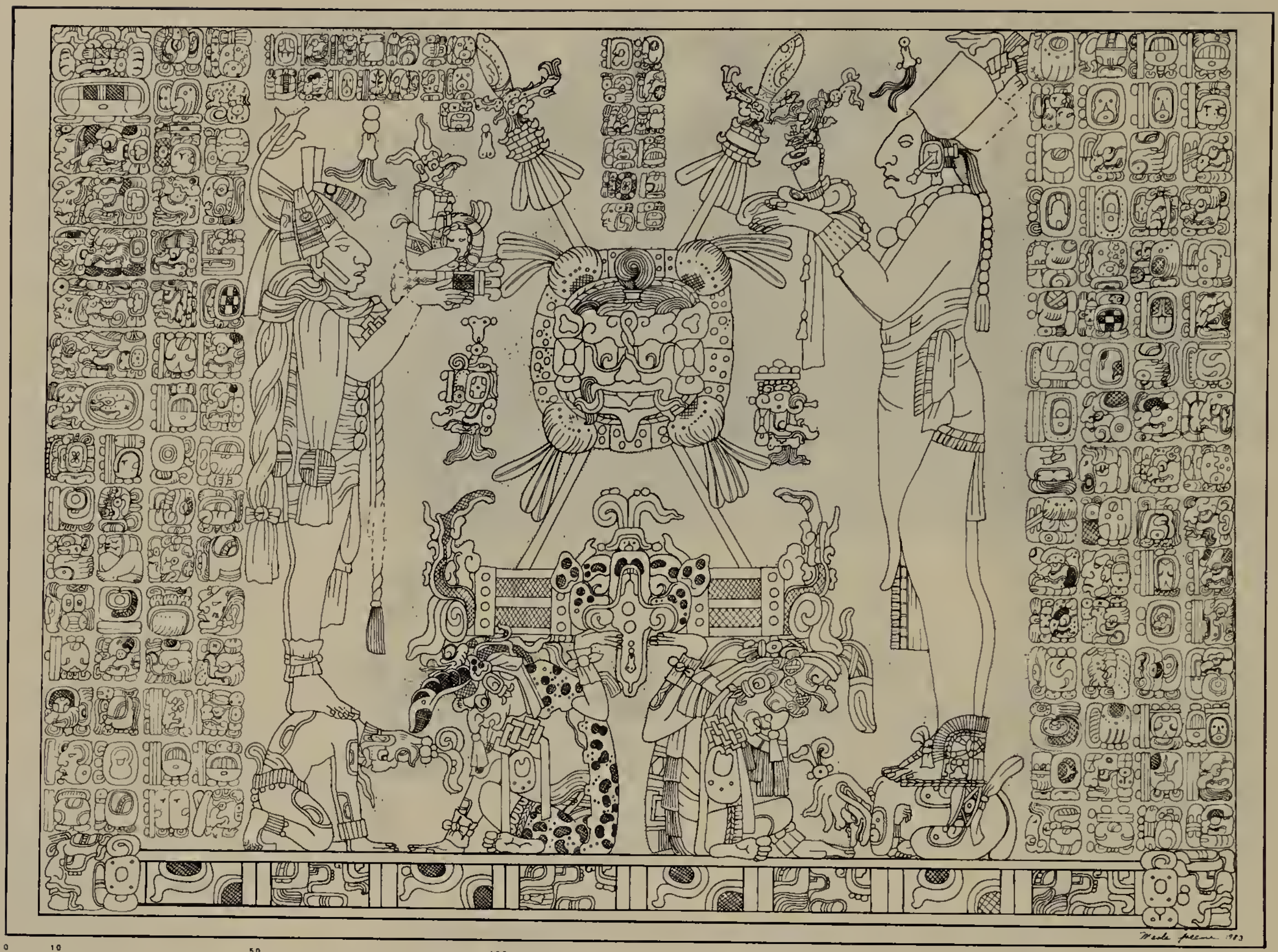
And this then is their birth; We shall tell of it here. Then it came to the day of their birth, and the maiden named Blood Woman gave birth. The grandmother was not present when they were born, they were born suddenly. Two of them were born, named Hunahpu and Xbalanque. They were born in the mountains.
—*Popul Vuh*

The Cave Locations of the Cross Group Images

The preceding discussion has established that a number of zoomorphs found in Maya art represent caves and cave passage. The Maya artist could manipulate these zoomorphs into various forms. This chapter focuses on three different ways caves are represented in the scenes on the Cross Group Tablets; it also demonstrates that each cave was the birthplace of a specific deity.

The Cross Group at Palenque consists of a raised plaza flanked on three sides by temple-pyramids. Each temple has an inner sanctuary with a tablet set into its back wall. Each tablet contains an image with caption text, that is, flanked on both sides with main text (figs. 31, 51, 53). The tablets have been named for an element of their central icon. The central icon of the Tablet of the Cross (TC) contains a stylized tree in the shape of a cross. The central icon of the Tablet of the Sun (TS) contains a square shield with a deity face that has been associated with the sun. The central icon of the Tablet of the Foliated Cross (TFC) contains a stylized corn plant in the shape of a cross.

The Cross Group Tablets form a continuous narrative that tells an illustrated story about the ruler Chan Bahlum II. A thorough dis-



Palenque T of S Tablet

Figure 53. Tablet of the Sun (drawing courtesy Merle Greene Robertson).

cussion of this narrative is found in chapter 7. However, it can be said in summary that the Cross Group story focuses on three events in the life of the Late Classic ruler Chan Bahlum II: his first lineage event[1] (at age six), his accession (at age forty-nine), and a series of undeciphered events (at age fifty-five) that I will refer to as the "2 Cib" events. The images on these three tablets illustrate rituals performed by Chan Bahlum on the occasion of his first lineage event and his accession. Each main text begins with the birth of a particular deity (as discussed in chapter 1). As noted earlier, the Cross Group Alfardas texts that record the birth of the Triad use the T526 "*cab* cave" sign as part of the verb, which means that these deities were thought to be born from a cave. The images of the Cross Group Tablets illustrate three different locations. The following discussion will demonstrate that these locations are caves associated with the births of the three deities of the Palenque Triad.

GII and the Maize Cave

The main text of the Tablet of the Foliated Cross documents the birth of GII/God K. The full figure glyph used in GII's nominal phrase is presumably a portrait of GII (fig. 5f). GII has lineage, maize, and fire aspects, as discussed in chapter 1.

In the birth statement of GII, a clause (C12–C14) is composed of *ut ix* 'it had come to pass', a "knot skull" verb (D12) that appears to state the birth, the *wits nal* 'the mountain of the corn' compound, a "shell" sign, and a compound composed of a *na* 'house' sign prefixed to a *kan* cross with *la* suffixes and leaves growing out the top. The main sign of this compound is a pictograph of the foliated cross/ maize plant of the image (a *kan* cross deity head with *la* suffixes and a maize plant growing out of its head) (D. Stuart, pers. comm., 1986). The compound translates as "the house of the maize plant." I infer from this statement that GII was born on "the mountain of the corn" and at "the house of the maize plant." Given that deities were thought to be born from caves and that the Alfardas text actually states that GII was born from a cave, I assume that "the house of the maize plant" is a reference to a cave that has a maize plant.

The fact that GII was born from a cave associated with maize reflects the maize association for GII. The *Popol Vuh* states that the first lineage heads of the Quiche were made from maize that was procured from a sacred mountain, which suggests a lineage connection for GII as well.

On the left side of the image, Chan Bahlum II is illustrated performing an accession ritual in front of a foliated cross/maize plant (fig. 31). He is standing on a *cauac* monster/cave (Chac's cave house) that has corn foliage growing from its mouth—that is, he is at "the house of the maize plant." As discussed earlier, two glyphs are infixed in the *cauac* monster's eyes. The left glyph is the "knot skull" sign, while the right glyph is the *wits nal* 'the mountain of the corn' compound. Thus, this particular personification of Chac's cave is labeled as being the cave on "the mountain of the corn," which is associated with GII's birth. In other words, the left side of the TFC illustrates Chan Bahlum II performing an accession ritual at the cave of GII's birth. This cave is also "the house of the maize plant."

On the right side of the TFC, a deity emerges from a shell with corn foliage emanating from it. On Tikal Altar 4, similar shell deities are illustrated emerging from quatrefoil cave openings. Shells are commonly found in caves; freshwater snails abound in caves with water (Guiteras-Holmes 1961:232; Macleod & Puleston 1978:74). In another compound that is associated with Venus as evening star, the T526 pictograph of the cave is replaced with what has been identified as a shell (Closs 1978). A reason that a shell would substitute for the

birth cave is found in a metaphor from the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis:* "as the snail comes from its shell, so man from his mother's womb" (Kelley 1965:95).

Another example of GII's cave is found on Bonampak Stela 1. This monument illustrates the ruler Chan Muan standing over a *cauac* monster with a quatrefoil cave opening in its head (Mathews 1980: fig. 3). Emerging from the quatrefoil cave opening is the Tonsured Maize God (Taube 1985:174). On Classic period pottery, Taube identified the costume of this deity as a beaded belt with a so-called *xoc* "shark" head and spondylus medallions as well as a beaded skirt. This is the same costume that Chan Bahlum wears at the mouth of GII's cave. The foliage growth on the sides of the Bonampak *cauac* monster (fig. 54) are marked with the same God C heads and personified ears of corn as those found on the TFC maize plant. In other words, the *cauac* monster and maize plant of the TFC image are conflated into one symbol on the Bonampak monument.

As noted previously, conflation is a device used in the text when the elements of two glyph blocks are merged but still retain their separate values. Thus the Bonampak *cauac* monster is Chac's cave with a sacred maize plant growing out of it; that is, it is the cave site of GII's birth. The text states that the occasion being illustrated is the 9.17.10.0.0 Period Ending ritual.

On Tikal Lintel 3 (Temple IV), the ruler is illustrated sitting on a platform decorated with *cauac* monsters (Jones & Satterthwaite 1982:74).[2] These *cauac* monsters have the God C heads and personified ears of corn found on the foliated cross/maize plant (fig. 42a). A double-headed serpent forms an enclosure around the ruler (fig. 42b). Emerging from the double-headed serpent is a deity identified by Taube (1985) as the Foliated Maize God. This *cauac* monster appears to be another example of GII's cave.

GIII and the Cave of the Twisted-Cord Jaguar Deity

The identification of both GIII and GI will be deferred for the moment (see discussion in chapter 6).

The birth of the Triad god, GIII, is stated in the main text of the Tablet of the Sun. In these passages, there are undeciphered portions concerning the birth of GIII that I believe contain references to a cave. However, until a solid decipherment of this passage is made, the argument that GIII's birth took place at a cave cannot be made directly from this text. However, the Alfardas text does state that GIII was born from a "*cab* cave." Furthermore, given the pan-Mesoamerican trait of associating the birth of deities with caves (Heyden 1975), I believe that it is safe to assume that GIII's birth also occurred at a cave location.



Figure 54. Bonampak Stela 1 *cauac* monster and Tablet of the Foliated Cross maize plant (drawing after Peter Mathews 1980).

On the TS, a double-headed band forms the base of the image (fig. 53). The band is formed of alternating *cab* signs and God C heads. The ends of the band have deity heads with the Roman nose and square eyes of both GI and the sun god, but the heads lack the distinguishing features of those deities. I believe this band is a reference to a cave passage in a *cab* cave. The birth association of the T526 *cab* sign suggests that this is a cave of birth.

The nominal phrase of GIII consists of several names (fig. 5b, c). The first name is a compound composed of a prefix that Lounsbury (1985) has read phonetically as *ma k'ina* 'great sun' followed by a main sign of an *ahau* glyph partially covered with jaguar skin. A loose translation would be "great sun, jaguar-covered lord" or using a translation by Schele (1985c) "great sun-hidden lord." A second name glyph for GIII is composed of a T1010.184.74 title followed by a T239.594 glyph (fig. 5c). Mathews (pers. comm., 1979) has observed a substitution between the T1010.184.74 title and another title composed of T67.184.166. D. Stuart (1986b) has read both these titles phonetically as *k'inich* (sun-eyed or sun-faced). The T239.594a compound consists of the head variant of *ahau* prefixed to a main sign of unknown meaning. A translation of this second name, in part, would be "sun-faced, lord?." On the Temple of the Inscriptions, GIII is called *k'inich ahau* 'sun-faced lord' (E4, middle panel).

Evidence to support the notion that there was a *cab* cave associated with *k'inich*/GIII is found on the Cross Group Alfardas. Each Cross Group temple has a pair of alfardas bearing an inscription that begins with the birth of its respective deity at the *cab* cave (Lounsbury 1980). Each narrative then joins this birth event by means of a huge Distance Number to an undeciphered historical event by Chan Bahlum II. On each Alfarda text, the position at H1 appears to refer to the location of the undeciphered event. On the Temple of the Foliated Cross, H1 is composed of the pictograph of the stylized maize plant from the image, which is subfixed with a *na* 'house' sign. In other words, the location is called "the maize plant of the house" (the maize plant of GII's cave). On the Temple of the Sun, the compound at H1, which appears to refer to the location of the historical event performed by Chan Bahlum, is composed of the pictograph of the *cab* cave with GIII's *ma k'ina* title prefixed to it. An upright hand and an element of unknown meaning appear above the "*cab* cave" sign (the *k'inich* title of GIII is also found prefixed to the "*cab* cave" glyph on Naranjo Stela 22 at E14).

Further evidence for a cave associated with *k'inich*/GIII is found on Aguateca Stela 1, which illustrates a ruler hand-scattering on the occasion of a Period Ending event. The place-name for this event was isolated in the text by Houston and Stuart, who concluded that this name was a reference to Aguateca itself (cited in D. Stuart 1987:20).

This place-name is composed of GIII's *ma k'ina* title plus the T529 pictograph of Chac's cave (T529 is a variant of T528) (fig. 5d). Given the evidence that I have presented to demonstrate that Period Ending events occurred at caves, and given that T528 is a pictograph of Chac's cave, it is safe to assume that this place-name is naming the Period Ending cave. This cave prefixed with GIII's *ma k'ina* title suggests that, just as the TFC *cauac* monster is labeled with glyphs that specify that it is GII's cave, the Aguateca pictograph of Chac's cave is labeled to specify that it is GIII's cave.

Part of the TS central icon is a distinctive throne held up by two deities. The left one has been identified as God L (fig. 53). Above the throne are two crossed spears and a shield. The portrait of a twisted-cord jaguar deity is found on the face of the shield. This deity is used as the head variant for the number seven. On other monuments, such as Copan Altar U, these components of the central icon are associated with a cave and with *k'inich*/GIII. The image on Altar U contains a *cauac* monster (fig. 55b). Infixed into the Altar U *cauac* monster's forehead is a throne that is remarkably similar to the one found on TS. On either side of the Altar U throne sit two actors. The right actor wears the diagnostic *muan* feather headdress of the rarely illustrated God L, who is seen holding up the TS throne. Although the left actor on Altar U is too eroded to identify, it seems quite likely that this actor was the so-called God M found on the right side of TS. Just as the Bonampak Stela 1 *cauac* monster is a conflation of a Chac's cave and the deified maize plant of the central icon of the TFC image, the Altar U *cauac* monster is a conflation of Chac's cave and the throne from the central icon of TS. This throne is found on top of a pictograph of the T529 sign in the text of Copan Stela 1 (fig. 55a).

On the Temple of the Inscriptions middle panel (at E4), GIII is referred to as *k'inich ahau*. In the eyes of the Altar U *cauac* monster are a *kin* 'sun' sign with an infixed T537 *ahau* sign, which D. Stuart (1986b) has read *k'inich ahau*, 'sun-eyed lord' (fig. 55c). Thus the Altar U *cauac* monster is labeled as the cave of *k'inich ahau*—GIII.

In the middle of the Altar U narrative there occurs an event (at F1) that is followed by a compound (at E2–F2) composed of the *k'inich* title, a throne, and the T528 *tun* 'stone' sign. D. Stuart (1986b) translates this compound as "the sun-eyed throne of stone" and has argued that it is proper name of Altar U, the implication being that Altar U was used as a throne. I translate this compound noun phrase somewhat differently, as "the sun-eyed throne of the stone," with the implication that it is a throne in Chac's cave that is specifically located in front of the stalagmite stone. Thrones do occur inside caves in Maya art, for on Piedras Negras Stela 5 (Maler 1901–3:I: pl. XV) the ruler sits inside the open mouth of a *cauac* monster on a jaguar throne. Furthermore, as will be discussed in chapter 7, the Palenque

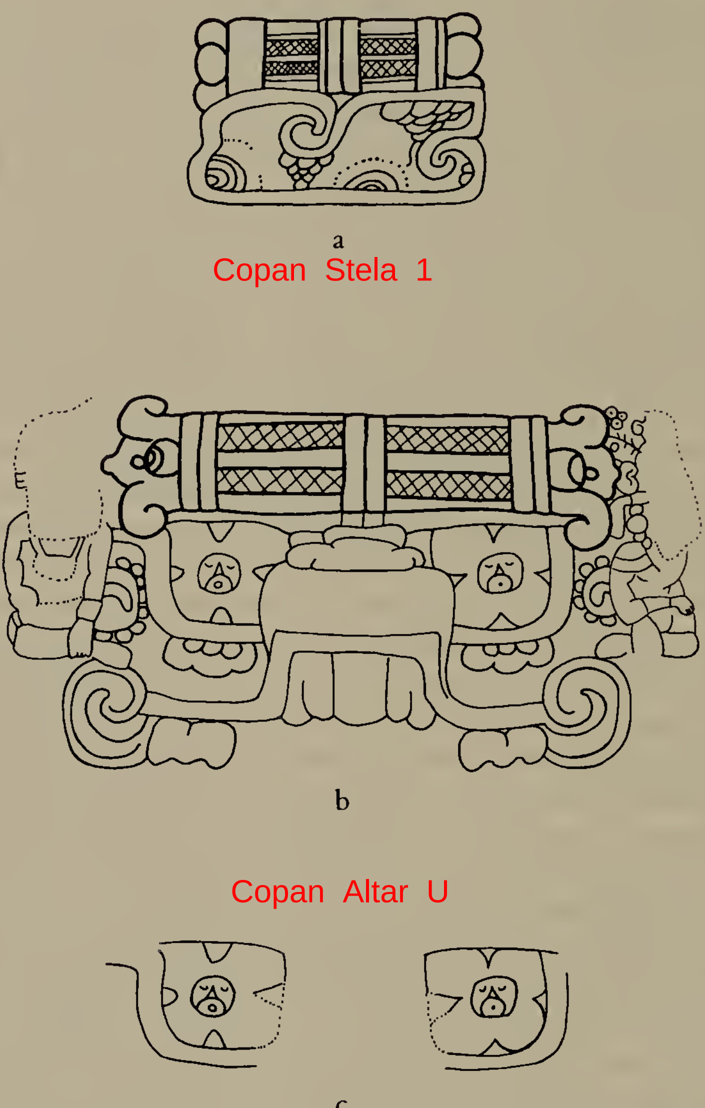
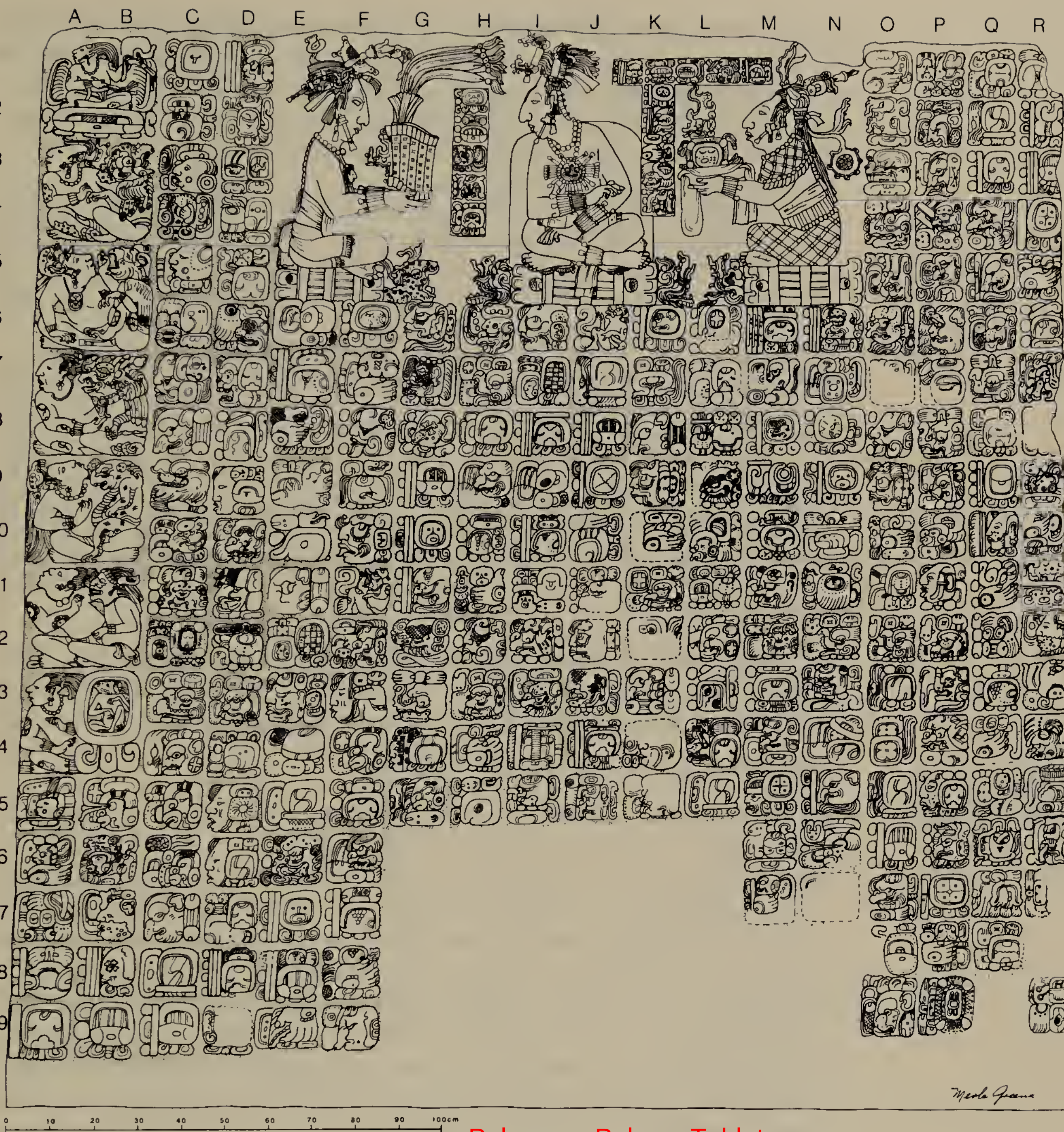


Figure 55. a. "Throne" glyph, Copan Stela 1 (drawing after Barbara Fash); b. Copan Altar U (drawing after Barbara Fash); c. detail Copan Altar U.



Palenque Palace Tablet

Figure 56. Palace Tablet (drawing courtesy Merle Greene Robertson).

Palace Tablet (fig. 56) illustrates Lord Xoc sitting on the same type of throne as found on Altar U and the Tablet of the Sun central icon. Behind Xoc and the throne is an object with the same shape as the Copan Peccary Skull stalagmite column. I suspect that this object is the stalagmite of the cave.

The image on Copan Altar U demonstrates that the throne and

deities of the central icon of the TS are found at Chac's cave, and that the throne is associated with GIII. Furthermore, an incense burner in the form of the twisted-cord jaguar deity (also referred to as the jaguar god of the Underworld) from the TS central icon was actually found in a cave, along with remnants of spears.

> Seler (1901:163–169) made some remarkable finds in a caves at Queñ Santo, in the extreme northwest corner of Guatemala. A room on a low platform and with a single doorway piercing its stone walls is built against the back wall of the innermost of three chambers, reached only by two artificially narrowed passages. . . . The room is just over 3m long and 2m deep with walls of well-dressed stone, once plastered, standing to a height of 2m. It reminds one of the temple sanctuaries at Maya sites, particularly Palenque. Immediately in front of the back wall of the shrine had stood two upright stone idols, one a meter high. Before them was an imposing incense burner of the Maya jaguar god of the number seven. . . . Other smaller incense burners, complete or fragmentary, stood in front of this, two containing parts of wooden spear-throwers. Most were also jaguar figures. (J. E. S. Thompson 1975:xxii)

Blom and LaFarge (1927) recorded that the sacred cave near Tortuguero contained incense burners modeled with the twisted-cord jaguar. This area is within the Classic period sphere of Palenque.

GI and the Cave of the Venus/Sun Monster

On the right side of the Tablet of the Cross, Chan Bahlum stands on the symbol of the cave passageway, the sky band body of the Venus/Sun monster, on the occasion of his accession (fig. 51). A stylized yaxche or ceiba tree with a bird deity on its top branch grows out of the cave.[3] The ceiba tree as a location of accession rituals has been discussed by J. E. S. Thompson (1970:195): "Below them [ceiba trees] they elect their alcaldes and they cense them with braziers." Thompson also noted that "they hold it for very certain with regards to the roots of the ceiba that it was through them [the ceiba tree roots] their lineage came." There is a pan-Mesoamerican belief that lineages emerged from caves. Indeed, in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Mani,* it is said that the descendants of the Itzas established their lineage at their wells and caves (Craine & Reindorp 1979:115). This suggests a strong connection between caves and the lineage ceiba tree.

On the Temple of the Cross Alfardas, the location of Chan Bahlum's historical event (at H1) is composed of a "six sky" compound. Given the parallel structures of these three Alfardas narratives, and given that the other two locations refer to the birth caves of their respective deities, it seems likely that this "six sky" place is re-

ferring to GI's cave passage of birth. However, I cannot directly relate this name to the location in the TC.

An association between GI and the Venus/Sun monster of the central icon is found in passages from the Temple of the Inscriptions Tablets. In this narrative, when the story line reaches the Period Ending rituals of 9.11 and 9.12, Pacal performs three actions, each associated with one member of the Palenque Triad (Kelley 1976: figs. 95, 96). The two instances of the actions referring to GI (middle panel D5 and J8) employ a pictograph of the rear head of the Venus/Sun monster (Spinden 1913).

Another example of the association between GI and the Venus/Sun monster is found on Copan Stela I. As noted previously, the name glyph of GI is a portrait of a roman-nosed, square-eyed deity with a fish barbel at the corner of his mouth and a similar shape on his forehead, and wearing a shell earring (fig. 5a). On Stela I, the ruler wears a mask in the form of the GI head, with shell earrings and fish barbels at the mouth (Maudslay 1889–1902:I: pl. 63). The rear head of the Venus/Sun monster is found as an element in the headdress of this ruler.

Given these examples of the association of GI and the Venus/Sun monster from the TC central icon, as well as the parallel structures among the three Cross Group Tablets, I believe it can be concluded that the TC is illustrating the birth site of GI, just as the TS and TFC illustrate the birth sites of GIII and GII.

The Cross Group Buildings

I suggest that the Cross Group was built to commemorate the events related in its narrative text. Each facade of the Cross Group temples is decorated with *cauac* monsters/caves, and each temple also has an inner sanctuary built in the form of a small temple. Given the strong visual parallel between this layout and the Quen Santo cave with the inner sanctuary mentioned by Seler, I think it is quite likely the Cross Group temples were built to represent the cave locations where the rituals illustrated on their tablets actually occurred. This idea is not new. Vogt (1969:595) and Benson (1985) argued that temple-pyramids represent mountains and caves.[4]

The Tablet of the Foliated Cross illustrates Chan Bahlum II outside the cave opening. On the TS and TC, the fact that the actors stand on the sky band suggests that they are inside the cave. The idea that the Classic Maya erected stalagmites and tree-crosses during their ceremonies leads me to believe that the tree-cross on the TC and the maize plant on the TFC may be similar objects, erected for the purpose of Chan Bahlum II's first lineage and accession events.

Where are the Cross Group caves located? Several caves with

Precolumbian remains have been discovered in the Palenque area. Cruz Guzman et al. (1980) relate a surviving Chol legend concerning the cave god believed to live in the large mountain to the northwest of Palenque (Cerro de don Juan). It is a reasonable speculation that the Temple of the Cross represents Don Juan Mountain and that the Temples of the Sun and Foliated Cross represent smaller mountains to the southwest and southeast, or that they represent smaller peaks on the main mountain itself.

The Cave Location on Kuna Lacanja Lintel 1

Another birth location of a Classic deity may be illustrated on Kuna Lacanja Lintel 1 (fig. 57). This scene contains two categories of text: a high relief text, and a small incised text next to the actor's head (Coe & Benson 1966). The image shows an actor seated on a *cauac* monster head and holding a double-headed God K bar. The story begins with an Initial Series Introductory Glyph on the left and gives the date 9.15.15.0.0 9 Ahau 8 Xul (4 June, A.D. 746). The event at B6–C1 is a Period Ending expression, and the subject is a cahal named Ah Zac Muluc whose name phrase (D1–J4) includes titles and a parentage statement. The reading of this sentence draws the eye across the image and identifies the action of the image as the Period Ending event by Ah Zac Muluc. The second episode begins at J5 with a Distance Number leading from a Calendar Round that refers to an earlier event. This event is Ah Zac Muluc's seating as cahal (L3–K4) and it is marked with the AEI as background information. The implication appears to be that because Ah Zac Muluc became cahal, he then performed the Period Ending ritual.

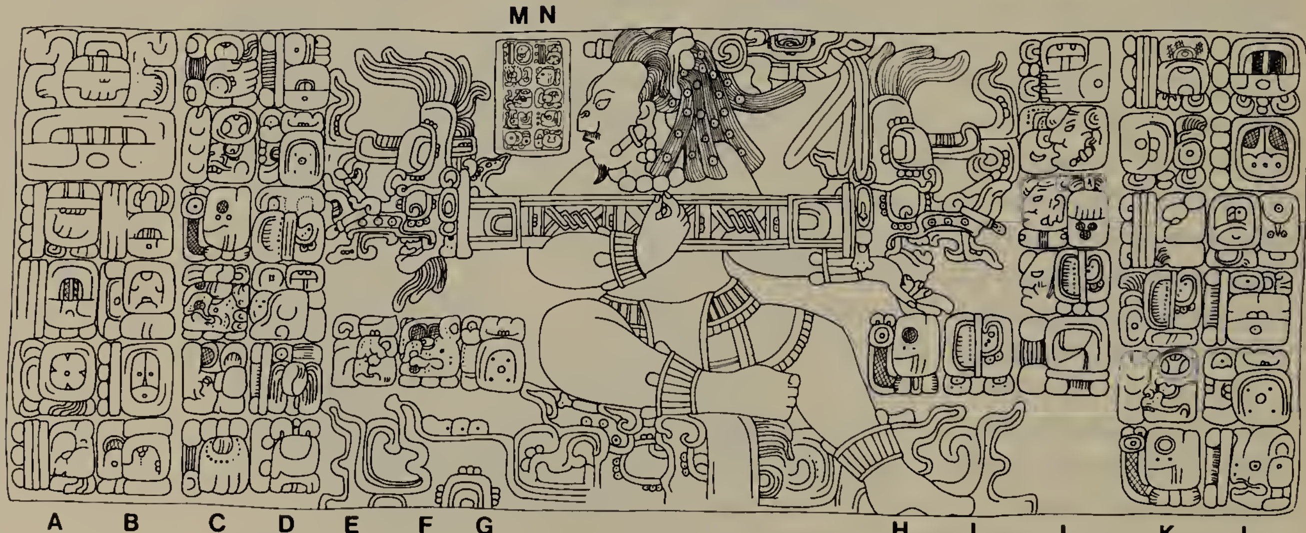


Figure 57. Kuna Lacanja Lintel 1 (drawing after David Stuart).

The reader then moves to the small caption text beside Ah Zac Muluc's head. The extended leg of Ah Zac Muluc creates an interesting diagonal line that echoes this movement. This incised block of caption text is visually insignificant in comparison to the high relief of the other text. This high relief caption text has already identified the actor, the action, and the occasion of the illustration. Therefore the incised caption text must be giving some other kind of information pertinent to the story.

The incised Kuna Lacanja caption text states a Calendar Round date and the birth of a deity who has a God K variant in his nominal phrase. D. Stuart (pers. comm.) notes that the place-name that ends this text is the same T591 "cenote cave" place-name found on Robicsek and Hales Vessel 120 (fig. 25). Given that Ah Zac Muluc is illustrated at a cave location (he sits on a *cauac* monster), I believe that the incised caption text refers to a God K whose birth is associated with this particular cave.

Cave Locations on Other Monuments

If we review a few of the monuments discussed in chapter 1, it is apparent that the actions illustrated in these scenes also occurred at cave locations. On Yaxchilan Lintel 26, the text states that the event took place at the *cab* cave (fig. 18). On Lintel 24, Shield Jaguar is illustrated holding a burning torch over Lady Xoc (fig. 19). The torch is most appropriate for the inside of a cave. On Aguateca Stela 1, there is nothing in the image to suggest a specific location, but the hand-scattering of the ruler is stated in the text to have occurred at the *ma k'ina* cave of Chac (fig. 11). On Piedras Negras Stela 6, the Venus/Sun monster frames the niche in which the ruler sits and defines the location as a cave (fig. 13). The base is composed of *cab* elements.[5] On Yaxchilan Stela 1, the upper part of the scene illustrates a deity flanked by two cartouches (fig. 6). These cartouches contain a male and a female actor.[6] Below these figures are deities emerging from the mouths of a double-headed serpent bar. The arch of this serpent bar defines the location of the event as inside a cave. Again, the auto-sacrifice of the ruler is illustrated in conjunction with the emergence of deities from the cave passageways. Hanging below the serpent are two GI heads, suggesting that this is the cave of GI. On Yaxchilan Stela 6, enough of the upper portion remains to indicate that this scene is also framed in the same manner (fig. 7).

It is not my intention to give the impression that the Maya did not perform any rituals in their temples and plazas (this question is discussed further in the following chapter), but it is the rituals of the caves that they more often chose to commemorate in their public art.

Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the discussion of cave imagery in this chapter. Generic symbols, such as quatrefoil cave openings and cave enclosures, can be labeled with specific glyph elements (T528, T526, etc.). These labels tell what kind of a cave it is or emphasize a certain aspect of the cave. Deities, rulers, and ancestors all seem to be the "owners" of certain caves. The cave passage is the sky of the Underworld sun, and it can be animated as a serpent or shown in a tunnel-like form, as a sky band.

In the images of Classic Maya art, these symbols of caves and cave passages are used to specify the location of the illustrated action. As well, the glyphs that represent these caves and cave passages in the text are used to specify the location of the stated event. The general theme of cave scenes with emerging actors is birth. The rituals performed at cave locations include Period Ending events, accessions, and other lineage events.

This overview of cave imagery demonstrates that the pictographic elements found in the image also occur with the same values in the text. Furthermore, as pointed out in an earlier chapter, the couplet structure of the text, which was identified by Lounsbury (1980), can also occur between the text and image. The two parts of a couplet state the same information, but they vary the manner in which it is expressed. The prime example of this is the vase illustrated in figure 45, where the image illustrates the cave passage as a serpent and the text refers to it as a sky. This couplet structure is reminiscent of the passages of the *Ritual of the Bacabs* where the incantations refer to the cave passage both as a serpent and as a sky.

Just as the main signs in the text can have affixes that label or indicate a particular value for the sign, the symbols in the image can also be labeled. An example of this is found in the *cauac* monster/cave, which can be decorated with maize foliage, jaguars, or macaws to indicate a particular association. The artist could also use a direct approach and label the symbol with glyphs, as was done on the *cauac* monsters of TFC and Copan Stela B. This device is directly related to infixing in the text. Conflation also occurs in the images. For example, Chac is often conflated with the serpent of his cave or with the tree of his cave.

Lounsbury (1980:99–103) noted that parts of Maya texts were often omitted without loss of meaning. The same is true for the images. Thus, a personification of the *cauac* monster does not have to appear in such a scene as that of the Tablet of the Sun for Maya viewers to understand that the location was Chac's mountain cave, any more than an image of Jesus on the cross need show a hill for Christian viewers to know that the event took place on Calvary Hill.



6
The Maya World View

Three times gushes the trickling water to you, Bacab in the heart of the [serpent]: three times it gushes for you, ye Bacabs in the heart of the earth. Ye fathers, ye gods! Chac Pauahtun is your symbol. Then ye shall distrust the wind of Ix Tan-yobal-nicte ("lady in the heart of the nicte flower"), Ix Tan-yol-[can] (lady in the heart of the [serpent]), Ix Tan-yol-metnal ("lady in the heart of Metnal").
—*Ritual of the Bacabs*

A discussion of Maya religion requires a detailed study of its structure and nature. Although such a study is well beyond the scope of this book, I would like to make some observations about Maya religion as it pertains to the discussion of caves. These remarks concern how the Maya define the real and invisible world, as well as the astronomical identifications of some of their cave deities.

The Mythological Caves on the Horizons

In Landa's *Relacion,* the limits of the world were defined by four Bacabs (also known as Pauahtuns and Chacs) who were placed at the four cardinal points by the gods to hold up the sky (Tozzer 1941:136). Each Bacab, Chac, and Pauahtun was associated with a direction and an appropriate color. In the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel,* it is stated that at each cardinal point, the gods set up a yaxche or ceiba tree that defined the limits of the world (Roys 1933:171). Each tree was also associated with the appropriate color. Also at this location were flint stones (the result of lightning) and wild bees. Since the Bacabs were the patrons of beekeeping and the Chacs were the deities

of lightning and intimately associated with the yaxche, it is not surprising to find these associations.

The modern Maya describe the earth as a square or cube with the sky above and an Underworld below (Vogt 1969:297). The Maya village (or town) is viewed by its inhabitants as the center of the world. At the cardinal points on the horizon are either four corner posts or four corner gods who are believed to hold up the sky and/or the earth on their shoulders (Vogt 1969:602). The modern four corner gods of the directions have been directly related to the four Postclassic Bacabs, Chacs, and Pauahtuns, who were also found at the four cardinal points.

In Maya thought, the deities sun, moon, and Venus, as well as the rain and wind gods, emerge from their homes to perform their work in the sky and then return. These celestial bodies and deities do not live in the sky, they merely travel across it and then return to their homes under the earth. This is best exemplified in the Chol myth where "it is night when the sun is inside his house" (Kathryn Josserand, pers. comm., 1989). Thus, the most sacred location in Maya thought is not the heaven/sky of Christian beliefs, but the cave homes from which the sun, moon, and other celestial bodies rise and set, and from which the rain and wind deities emerge and to which they return.

The sun, moon, and other celestial bodies rise and set at the horizon, and this suggests the concept of mythological caves on the horizon. The existence of the concept of a mythological cave located at each of the cardinal points is confirmed by the incantations in the *Ritual of the Bacabs*. In this document, the serpent/sky cave passages are mentioned in sets of four, with each serpent/sky cave associated with a cardinal direction and its appropriate color. Another incantation makes a reference to these four directional serpents/skies as divisions:

> There occurred the creation, then occurred the birth in the four divisions of the [serpent]; then it occurred in the four divisions of the clouds. (Roys 1965:9)

In each of these four cave passages, there exists a Bacab and/or a Pauahtun who is also associated with a particular color and direction. Furthermore, each of the four cave locations is specifically referred to as the "house" of a Pauahtun. These cave passages are not only the home of the wind god Pauahtun, but the birthplaces of diseases. In Maya belief, winds are said to be formed in caves, to come from the four cardinal points, and to bring disease. In one incantation, the cave of birth is said specifically to be located on the horizon: "There came your cry from the horizon" (Roys 1965:68). That these caves are also

the caves of the Chacs is demonstrated by the term *chun caan* 'the trunk of the sky', which refers to both the watery place of origin of winds (the cave of the Pauahtun) and the rain god's cave.

In the *Ritual of the Bacabs,* the moon goddess Ix Chel is named as one of the mothers of the diseases. Ix Chel 'Lady Rainbow' is associated with the four directional colors (Roys 1965:28), and the Maya believe that rainbows spring forth from a cave.[1] The bow of a rainbow terminates towards the horizon, which again suggests the notion of mythological caves on the horizons. The Maya moon goddess is said to live in a cave ("the departure of the moon goddess to her cave"). In Central Mexican belief, the moon goddess is said to dwell in the rain god's abode Tamoanchan. This information is relevant to the Maya area because *Tamoanchan* is a Maya loan word meaning "at cloud/serpent" or "at cloud/sky," a perfect description of the Maya rain god's cave. Hence, the home of the moon goddess also appears to be the four mythological caves on the horizon associated with Chac.

References to four mythological caves associated with the directions are found in Maya art. On Robicsek and Hales Vessel 120, Chac is standing in a pool of water inside a cave. The text states that the occasion is the first appearance of Venus as evening star and refers to the cave as a "black cenote" cave. Given that this is a mythological scene and that Venus rises on the western horizon, it can be concluded that there existed in Classic Maya thought a cave on the western horizon. Indeed, the "black cenote" place-name identifies it as such, for black is the color associated with west.

On Madrid codex pages 3–5, each Chac who is illustrated in front of a "serpent" cave passage is associated with one of the four directions. An association between the direction north and a serpent is found in the T114.566:23 glyph, tentatively identified as "north" by J. E. S. Thompson (1950:fig. 45) and Kelley (1976:56) (fig. 44c). The T114.566:23 glyph is composed of a T566 main sign, which is the pictograph of a segment of a serpent's body (Seler 1902–23).[2] This "north/serpent" glyph is found on Copan Stela A with the directional glyphs east, west, and south.[3]

The Invisible World of the Cave

How the Maya viewed the space beyond the boundaries of the world is one of the most elusive aspects of Maya religion. A Central Mexican source refers to thirteen layers of heaven and nine layers of the Underworld. It has been widely assumed that "heaven" in this sense is located in the sky. It has been further assumed by most modern researchers that this cosmological model is applicable to the Maya area. This assumption is based on a passage from the *Book of Chilam*

Balam of Chumayel that refers to *Oxlahun-ti-ku* '13 gods' and *Bolon-ti-ku* '9 gods'. J. E. S. Thompson (1970:195) developed his own cosmological model from this material:

> There were thirteen "layers" of heaven and nine of the underworld . . . the thirteen celestial layers were arranged as six steps ascending from the eastern horizon to the seventh, the zenith, whence six more steps led down to the western horizon. Similarly, four more steps led down from the western horizon to the nadir of the underworld, whence four more steps ascended to the eastern horizon. Thus there were really only seven celestial and five infernal layers. The sun followed this sort of stepped rhomboid on his daily journey across the sky and his nightly traverse of the underworld.

Most researchers have presented variations on Thompson's model when describing the Maya "heaven" and Underworld. In the *Ritual of the Bacabs,* however, there are incantations that speak of the layers or folds of the cave passage:

> Alas, six folds in the sky; alas, six folds in Metnal. He is to be cast behind the north [serpent], alas. This was the heating by the heat of the cave, by the heat of the water. (Roys 1965:36)

> He would fall behind the east [serpent], at the place of Ix Kuknab, just before they would vomit, just before they would cry out. The offspring, how: of Ix ti-ho-tzab from the fifth layer of the [serpent]. . . . It would fall at the place of the west arbor of Ix Co-ti-pan, at the place of Ix Tah-kab, at the place of U-lam-tzin. This would be said by Ah Olon-tzin, the oo-bird. This would be said when macaw-seizure recieved the order. How? In the fifth layer of the sky." (Roys 1965:8–9)

Although Roys (1965:37) dismisses it as an error, one incantation refers to the birth coming from the thirteenth layer of the earth. Another incantation refers to the location of the cave passages as four serpents, each associated with a directional color (Roys 1965:64–65). The term *thirteen layers* is repeatedly used in connection with these serpents/cave passages. As noted above, several Classic texts refer to caves and cave passages that have numbers prefixed to them. For example, the cave illustrated in figure 45 is called the "*na* five sky." From these examples, it can be concluded that the cave was viewed as a layered space, with at least thirteen layers.

In the *Ritual of the Bacabs,* the protagonist is said at one point to be guarding his rear in the heart of the Underworld (Roys 1965:64). In the previous paragraph, he is said to be guarding his rear "behind" the serpent. This suggests to me that the Underworld was conceived of as being further into the cave passage, behind what was the serpent/sky area of the cave. I am not advocating the view that the Maya

had no mythological location associated with the sky, but I do suggest that the cave represented the entrance to two layered but separate mythological locations: one associated with the concept of heaven/sky/serpent, and a deeper one associated with the Underworld proper. Hence, Chac, the sun, and the moon, who are not Lords of the Underworld, can still live in the cave.[4]

Evidence to support this proposal is found in the colonial period documents concerning the afterlife and the modern Maya concepts concerning souls. A sixteenth-century quotation from Landa on the immortality of the soul describes the Maya "afterlife":

> They said that this future life was divided into a good and a bad life—into a painful one and one full of rest. . . . The delights which they said they were to obtain, if they were good, were to go to a delightful place, where nothing would give them pain and where they would have an abundance of foods and drinks of great sweetness, and a tree which they call the yaxche . . . under the branches and the shadow of which they would rest and forever cease from labour. The penalties of a bad life, which they said that the bad would suffer, were to go to a place lower than the other, which they called Metnal." (Tozzer 1941:131)

This is a direct statement that two separate mythological locations existed in Maya thought. However, this statement only places the Underworld as being "lower" than "heaven."

In Yucatec, the Maya term *caan* 'sky' was recruited to translate the Christian concept of heaven. La Farge and Byers (1931:90, 225) recorded two terms, *sat chan* and *sat caan,* used in the Jacaltenango and Chuj areas for the Christian "heaven." The direct translations of these terms, "face of the serpent" and "face of the sky," suggest that they are derived from a Maya concept; certainly no European Christian imagery would associate heaven with serpents. Furthermore, there are a number of modern myths that do not fit the Christian concept of heaven. In Chol texts collected by Whittaker and Warkentin (1965:87), the spirits of the dead are said to go to heaven where they dwell with God who is "under the ground." In various parts of the Maya area, "souls"—which Christians normally associate with heaven—are said to be located in caves. In a Yucatec myth, a man goes to a cave in search of his wife's lost soul (E. H. Thompson 1932:82). At Jacaltenango, souls go to live in a cave. Wisdom (1940:428) noted that Chorti souls are said to go to the west where they remain forever. Tzotzils are buried at sunset so that they can travel with the sun to the Underworld. In the Tzeltal town of Pinola, Hermitte (1964:72) noted that "the destiny of the spirit after death has been strongly influenced by Catholicism. Almost every infor-

mant agrees that the spirit goes to heaven, purgatory, or hell shortly after death. Yet, they talk about crossing a river of blood, mounted on the black dog, before reaching the after-world. . . . The oldest informant in the village considers the caves as the exclusive, ultimate abode of the spirit." These non-Christian concepts suggest that the Precolumbian Maya "heaven" was located in a cave.

Genet (1928) suggested a three-layer world model in which the four Pauahtuns lived below ground (at the four cardinal points) and held up the earth, the four Bacabs lived on the earth and held up the sky, and the four Chacs lived in the sky and held up heaven. I suggest another interpretation. I believe that these three sets of deities were placed at each of the four corners of the world to hold up the sky of the cave. In other words, they held open the portal between the real world and the supernatural world. I further suggest that these three deities may be the personification of the stalagmite column that visually appears to hold up the cave passage.

Ritual Circuits

Many authors have noted that the Maya structure their space after their quadripartite model of the world. For example, Wisdom (1940:430) recorded that both the milpa and the altar were thought to represent the world in miniature. The quadripartite world model also appears in Postclassic ceremonies, where the ritual space was defined by Chac imitators placed at the cardinal points, or in some cases by *acantuns* placed at the cardinal points (Tozzer 1941:160). The space around highland towns, such as Zinacantan, is defined by four sacred mountains (Vogt 1969:602). In the Tzeltal town of Pinola, the four corner places are caves: Muk' Nah in the east, Ch'en in the north, Tzawahunch'en in the south, and Campanaton in the west. The god of rain, thunder, lightning, and corn is believed to live in these caves (Hermitte 1964:49). Clearly, these caves represent the local version of the mythological caves of the four directions.

In most parts of the Maya region, the modern Maya conduct ritual circuits around the spaces, which they define by four points. For example, a modern Quiche ceremony involves pilgrimages to the mountains of the four directions, which are located at the boundaries of the municipality. According to B. Tedlock (1982:82), "this sacred circuit is called both the 'sowing and the planting' (*awexibal ticbal*) of the town and the 'stabilization' (*chac'alic*) of the town. The Quiche term *chac'alic,* which in everyday usage refers to the firm placement of a table on its four legs, here refers to the firm placement of the town within its four mountains, so that it will not wobble or tip over." B. Tedlock (1982:99) also recorded the survival of ritual processions to the four mountains during the Quiche New Year cere-

monies. As documented by La Farge and Byers (1931), Kanjobal New Year ceremonies involved ritual processions to mountains and caves.

There is evidence that the Classic Maya had the concept of the four mythological caves of the horizons and that it was at the local versions of these directional caves of the rain god that they performed the rituals of the Period Ending event. In most commemorations of the Classic Period Ending event, the ruler is illustrated just once, performing one particular action at one particular cave location. However, this does not mean that he did not perform other rituals at other caves. As an example, on the Palenque Cross Group Tablets, Chan Bahlum is illustrated performing rituals on the occasion of his accession at three different cave locations. Nowhere else in the corpus of Maya art is there such an expanded view of the accession rites, yet it is highly likely that other rulers performed similar sequential actions on the occasion of their own accessions (see chapter 7).

Evidence that the Classic ruler performed Period Ending rituals at more than one location is found on Copan Stela B and Stela F of the main plaza. These two monuments, which face each other on an east/west axis, both commemorate the 9.15.0.0.0 4 Ahau 13 Yax (22 August, A.D. 731) Period Ending by the ruler 18 Jog. On Stela B, this ruler is illustrated standing in the open mouth of a *cauac* monster. Macaw heads decorate the *cauac* monster, which suggests that macaws are somehow associated with this cave. In the eyes of the rear head of the *cauac* monster are two glyphs that label or name the *cauac* monster. The first glyph is composed of a macaw head and the T117:528 mountain cave of Chac.[5] The second glyph is composed of the number four and the T561 "sky" glyph with a serpent attached to it (fig. 44i). These two glyphs are naming the Stela B *cauac* monster as Chac's cave on the "macaw mountain," and possibly as one of the four directional serpent/sky caves.[6]

The text on Stela F (Maudslay 1889–1902:I:pl. 50) states that the event is the Period Ending ceremony. The ruler is again illustrated holding a double-headed sky band, but he wears a different costume. The *cauac* monster is no longer conflated with the stela, but appears as a second sculpture in front of Stela F (fig. 58). Most interestingly, this free-standing *cauac* monster is decorated with two full figure jaguars. In other words, the location of this Period Ending ritual is one of Chac's caves that is associated with jaguars. Stela B and Stela F illustrate two rituals that were part of the 9.15.0.0.0 Period Ending event and occurred at different cave locations. I suspect that the double stelae at Quirigua (Stela A and Stela C; Stela E and Stela F) that record in their texts Period Ending rituals that occurred on the same day function in this same manner.

At Seibal, there is a small temple/platform (Structure A-3) with



Figure 58. Copan Stela F.

Seibal Stelae 8 - 11

four staircases on each side. In the center of the building and at the bottom of each staircase, the Maya erected a stela (Greene, Rands & Graham 1972:pl. 107–110; D. Stuart 1988). Each of the staircase stelae illustrates a different ritual action of the 10.1.0.0.0 5 Ahau 3 Kayab Period Ending (30 November, A.D. 849). In two of the scenes (Stela 9 and Stela 10), the ruler holds the serpent/sky ceremonial bar. On Stela 9, the rear head of the Venus/Sun monster emerges from the bar. The place-name of the event on Stela 8 is the quatrefoil cave opening. This iconographic and epigraphic information suggests that these Period Ending actions occurred at cave locations. The arrangements of the stelae suggests that these were four different caves, each associated with a direction, and by extension, with a mythological world cave.

To read the narratives found on the stelae of Seibal Structure A-3, a viewer would be led in a ritual circuit around the platform, much like the path the ruler would have taken around the ritual border of Seibal. Beginning with the east side (for the east side is the predominant ritual starting point in modern ceremonies), the viewer reads the text across the top of Stela 11, which appears to give background information about the Period Ending event. The caption text states the Period Ending event, and the ruler is illustrated hand-scattering. Moving to the right, following the standard direction in which hieroglyphic texts are read, the viewer encounters Stela 10 on the north side. This counter-clockwise motion also follows the modern ritual circuit (Vogt 1969:391, 602). The Stela 10 text repeats the Period Ending date and uses a hand-scattering verb. The image illustrates the ruler holding the ceremonial bar with the rear head of the Venus/Sun monster emerging from the lower end.[7]

Moving to the west side, the viewer reaches Stela 9, which again repeats the Period Ending date. The verbal couplet that states the event includes the pictograph of a hand holding God C, and the image illustrates the ruler holding a serpent/sky ceremonial bar with God C on its tail. Walking to the south side, the viewer reads the narrative of Stela 8, which again states the Period Ending event and also states the location to be a cave. The ruler is dressed as a jaguar and holds a God K head in his hand. Finally, the viewer moves into the temple of the structure to read the text on Stela 21. It again states the Period Ending event, which this time occurred within the site of Seibal itself. The stela is unfortunately eroded, but the image illustrates the ruler holding up the God K manikin scepter.

Why would the Classic Maya perform a ritual circuit? A quotation from Vogt (1969:391) may shed some light:

> When groups of cargoholders make a circuit around Zinacantan Center they are symbolically saying (on behalf of all Zinacantecos), "this

> is our sacred center through which the holy river flows and around which live our ancestral gods watching over and guarding all of us." When the members of a sna [domestic group] make the *k'in krus* circuit around the lands they have inherited from their patrilineal ancestors, they are saying symbolically, "these are our lands." . . . Hence each circuit symbolically designates property rights and marks off crucial social spaces in the Zinacanteco world.

It almost goes without saying that each Classic town or area had its own set of ritual caves that represented the mythological caves. Thus, Chac's caves depicted in the artwork of Copan are not at the same location as Chac's caves depicted in the artwork of Palenque. The modern ceremonies involving sacred caves and mountain shrines are complex. On the whole, these sacred places are not visually impressive, and the material evidence of their importance is not great. Given the mundane appearance of many of these sacred locations, we need not expect all Classic caves to have the impressive qualities of such caves as Naj Tunich, Loltun, or Balankanche.

We can apply the information about Classic ritual circuits to Postclassic and modern sources. Landa stated that the limits of each town were defined by ritual entrances located at the four cardinal points: "It was the custom in all of the towns in Yucatan that there should be two heaps of stone, facing each other at the entrance of the town, on all four sides of the town" (Tozzer 1941:139). Landa mentions that these symbolic entrances were not related to the actual entrances into the town but were ritual "entrances" used during the New Year ceremonies. Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934:114) noted the similarities between Landa's account and the ritual entrances to modern towns, whose limits are also defined by four entrances. At each of these modern "entrances" are two crosses embedded in separate piles of stone, similar to Landa's two heaps of stones. A fifth set of crosses is located at the cenote, which is considered to be the center of the town. The real entrances to the modern town were not related to the four ritual entrances. These parallels suggest that the ritual space of the town was set up to represent the quadripartite world model. I believe that the piles of stones and crosses represent four mountains (with caves) and their sacred tree-crosses.

The Katun Ceremony at the End of the Previous Era

Chac's cave, illustrated on the vessel in figure 45, is referred to in its accompanying text as the *na* five *chan* 'the house of five sky'. The text on Tila Stela A refers to the mythological 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ahau 8 Cumku Period Ending event (13 August, 3114 B.C.). The undeci-

phered verb is followed by the Paddlers' names and a *na* five *ah po chan* compound, which suggests that this mythological Period Ending event of the Paddler deities was thought to have occurred at Chac's cave.

The Period Ending event 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ahau 8 Cumku is also recorded on Quirigua Stela C (Maudslay 1889–1902:II:pl. 19). The date is followed by a series of four Period Ending events that occurred at four different locations (fig. 59). The first event phrase is composed of the glyphs for *ts'ap,* T528 *tun* 'stone', and the Paddler deities. It translates as "the stone of the Paddler deities was thrust into the ground." The next clause is *ut ix* 'it had already come to pass' and the *na* five *chan* 'house of the five sky' place-name. This is followed by a compound composed of an *ix* 'jaguar' sign prefixed to a throne and a T528 *tun* 'stone' sign: "the jaguar throne of the stone." I infer from this that at this mythological Period Ending event a stalagmite stone belonging to the Paddler deities was thrust in the ground in Chac's cave, which contained a jaguar throne.

The second event phrase of the Period Ending ceremony is again the *ts'ap* verb, T528 *tun* 'stone' sign, and a head variant with a "black" prefix. The head variant is a Roman-nosed character with a serpent's mouth. It is prefixed with a "black" sign and superfixed with a *yax.* The identity of this deity is unknown. Again, the *ut ix* 'it had already come to pass' sign appears, and the place-name for this second stalagmite erection contains the T526 "*cab* cave" sign prefixed to an eroded cartouche. The place-name is followed by a throne and the T528 *tun* 'stone' glyph. In this case, a zoomorphic head is attached to the throne. Thus, this stalagmite stone was thrust into the ground in front of a different throne, and at a different cave.

The third event begins with the *ut ix* 'it had already come to pass' sign and the "completion of the tun" verb. The place-name is a *na chan* 'house of the serpent', followed by an *imix* sign attached to the throne, and then the T528 *tun* 'stone' sign. Again, the third location has a specific kind of throne.

The fourth event begins with the *ut ix* 'it had already come to pass' sign, a "sky" glyph, a compound composed of a *yax* sign prefixed to three stacked *cauac* glyphs (possibly meaning "new cycle"), and the "completion of the thirteenth baktun" verb. It ends with the *u cab* place-name phrase (the *cab* sign is in personified form). The subject of this phrase is a compound composed of a six, *ah po,* and "sky" sign. As discussed in the previous chapter, the "six *ah po* sky" compound appears to name the cave of GI.

On the opposite side of Stela C, the narrative continues with a *ts'ap* event on the 9.1.0.0.0 6 Ahau 13 Yaxkin Period Ending (28 August, A.D. 455), a reference to the 9.0.0.0.0 8 Ahau 13 Ceh Period



Figure 59. Quirigua Stela C text (drawing after Maudslay 1889–1902).

Ending event (11 December, A.D. 435), and finally the 9.17.5.0.0 6 Ahau 13 Kayab Period Ending event (29 December, A.D. 775) and hand-scattering by the Quirigua ruler Two-Legged Sky.

The Quirigua Stela C passages that refer to the mythological Period Ending event appear to indicate that at the ceremony that ended the previous era, stalagmite stones were erected at four caves. It is reminiscent of the creation myth recorded by Landa and in the *Chumayel* in which the Bacabs and yaxche were placed at the four directions. If this interpretation of the mythological 13.0.0.0.0. Period Ending event is correct, then this narrative is presenting the divine model for the historical Period Ending ceremonies of Two-Legged Sky.

In summary, there is evidence for the concept of four mythological caves that contained a sacred tree and stalagmite stone. These four caves were thought to be located on the horizon and to define the limits of the world. In the caves lived the Bacabs, Chacs, and Pauahtuns, as well as the sun, moon, and Venus. In the beginning, the Bacabs, Chacs, Pauahtuns, and yaxches were placed at the four corners to define the limits of the world. When the Maya used this four-point model to define their communities and ritual spaces, they were, in effect, replicating the sacred order. The Quirigua text suggests that the Classic Maya lord was reenacting the sacred ordering of the world when he performed the ritual circuit of the Period Ending event.

The *Cauac* Months

In the 365-day haab calendar, four month positions (Ch'en, Yax, Sac, and Ceh) use the T528 glyph as a main sign. The prefixes *ek* 'black', *yax* 'blue/green', *sac* 'white' and *chac* 'red', respectively, distinguish these month signs. They are literally "black lightning/thunder," "blue/green lightning/thunder," "white lightning/thunder," and "red lightning/thunder." The color association suggests that they are associated with the directions, and by extension with Chac's caves (the *yax* 'blue/green' would be related to the center).

The word *ch'en* 'cave' that is used to express the "black lightning/thunder" compound is obviously related to Chac's cave. The color prefixes of the months Yax and Sac, *yax* and *sac* respectively, are directly reflected in their names. At first glance, there appears to be no relationship between the Yucatec month name *Ceh* 'deer' and its "red lightning/thunder" glyph. Why then would this month sign be called "deer" in Yucatec? I believe the reason is that the east cave of Chac was thought to be the location where the sun rose from the Underworld. The animal most commonly identified with the sun is

a deer. In fact, in Distance Numbers, the deer is the personification of the *kin* 'sun' sign.

If we apply these month names to the world model found in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel,* they would refer to the black/ west cave, the blue-green/center cave, the white/north cave and the red/east cave of Chac (the fifth cave of Chac, the yellow/south cave, is not represented in this grouping). In the quadripartite world model, these four caves—the east, center, west, and north caves of Chac—define the limits of the northern area of the earth and sky. In the Maya region, the rainy season begins during early May when the sun is moving towards its northernmost point reached on the summer solstice (June 21). In other words, the rainy season occurs when the sun is in the northern sky. Given the association of *cauac* with rain, I suspect that at the time of the original invention of this calendar, these four *cauac* months represented the first eighty days of the rainy season.

Emblem Glyphs

There is some evidence to indicate that the main sign of the emblem glyph represents a cave associated with a particular lineage. As noted in chapter 1, the emblem glyph is composed of the "scattered blood" and *ahpo* 'lord' signs prefixed to a main sign (fig. 3f). In most cases, the main sign is specific to the inscriptions of a particular site. Because the main signs of emblem glyphs can take locative prepositions, it has been assumed that the main sign refers to a geographical location, whether that of the site itself or the polity surrounding it.

If we take the image of the lord hand-scattering, as on Yaxchilan Stela 6 (fig. 7) and replace the figure of the ruler with an *ahpo* 'lord' title, then we have the same configuration as the emblem glyph prefix. In other words, the emblem glyph can be translated as the "scattering lord of X." This still does not tell us the meaning of X. However, given that the lord hand-scatters at a cave location, this suggests to me that the main sign might be the name of the cave from which this lord's lineage was thought to have come. Many of the emblem glyph main signs incorporate the T528 pictograph of Chac's cave, the T526 "*cab* cave" sign, or other symbols associated with caves.

Evidence to support the interpretation that the main sign of the emblem glyph may name a cave is found on Copan Stela A, where the text gives a coupleted phrase composed of eight glyphs. The first four glyphs are redundant and are each composed of a "four" prefixed to either a "sky" sign or a "sky" sign head variant. The next four glyphs are the emblem glyphs of Copan, Tikal, Site Q, and Palenque. As noted by Lounsbury, the two parts of a couplet repeat the

same information, but in a slightly different way. This phrase appears to equate the sky/cave passage with the emblem glyph.

Further evidence of the emblem glyph's cave nature is found in the T526 "*cab* cave" sign used in the Venus compound ("star over T526"). In chapter 3, I presented evidence to demonstrate that this compound represents the cave through which Venus emerges from the Underworld (fig. 29c). In some cases, the "Venus over *cab* cave" sign is followed by the main sign of a particular emblem glyph. In some rare cases, the main sign of the emblem glyph replaces the "*cab* cave" sign in this compound. This substitution between the "*cab* cave" sign and the main sign of the emblem glyph suggests that the emblem glyph main sign functions as a cave place-name. Furthermore, as discussed above, Seibal Stela 8 and Stela 10 both record Period Ending cave events that occurred on the same date. In the text, the place-name of the Stela 8 Period Ending event is a pictograph of the quatrefoil opening (at B7) (Greene, Rands & Graham 1972:pl. 107); on Stela 10, it is the Seibal emblem glyph (at 11b) (Greene, Rands & Graham 1972:pl. 109).

Some Tzeltal towns are named after their sacred caves, as discussed in chapter 3. The indigenous name for the Tzotzil town of San Andres Larrainzar, *Zacanch'en* 'white cave', was taken from the sacred cave nearby. It is very possible that the Classic town and polity were named after their lineage cave, but I believe the origin of the name lies in the cave.[8]

Astronomical Identification of Deities Associated with Caves

Some of the deities associated with caves have astronomical associations. I will discuss in this section the *Popol Vuh* deities, the skeletal deity on Lords of the Underworld Vase 4, the twisted-cord jaguar deity, and, finally, the Palenque Triad.

The most visually prominent celestial bodies are the sun, the moon, and Venus. Before beginning a discussion of the deities who represent these bodies, I will present a brief description of how their cycles appear to an observer. A complete description of these cycles is found in Aveni (1980, in press).

Beginning the cycle of Venus with its first appearance as morning star, Venus is seen, very briefly, just before sunrise on the eastern horizon. On the following days Venus appears each day a little earlier in the predawn sky above the eastern horizon and rises a little higher in the sky before sunrise. On the day when it rises about three hours before the sun it climbs to approximately a 47-degree angle from the horizon. This is called western maximum elongation. During the next days, Venus begins to rise later and consequently does not rise as high

in the sky before the sun rises. Finally Venus does not appear at all above the horizon. This period as morning star lasts about 263 days.

For about 50 days, Venus is not seen. Then it appears just after sunset on the western horizon, its first appearance as evening star. Each day, it appears after sunset, a little higher in the sky, and then sets in the west. Finally it reaches maximum eastern elongation. For the remaining days of its evening star cycle, Venus appears closer to the horizon after sunset. Finally it makes its last appearance. This cycle is also about 263 days long. Venus disappears for about a week and then appears again to begin its morning cycle.

This synodic period of Venus is about 584 days long. However, because Venus makes the same configuration in the sky only once every five synodic periods, its synodic period can be grouped into a larger set of five cycles (Aveni 1987). The Dresden codex Venus table gives this cycle of five Venus synodic periods, which are equivalent to 2,920 days (5 × 584). This cycle is also equal to eight cycles of a Maya year (8 × 365 = 2,920). The formal positions for the stations of Venus found in the Dresden codex tables are not related to the real cycle. For example, although the period of invisibility at superior conjunction varies greatly, it is on average about 50 days long. However, the Dresden codex records 90 days. We do not understand this discrepancy.

The moon's cycle is 29.53 days long. Like everything else in the sky, the moon travels in a westward direction each night. Beginning with the waxing moon, the moon is seen as a thin crescent in the west, at twilight, close to the position of the sun. It is visible for only a few moments. Each day at sunset it is seen a little higher above the western horizon before setting in the west. The disk of the moon grows fuller with each passing day, and this period is referred to as the waxing moon.

When the disk is half full, the moon appears midway across the sky around sunset and then travels to the western horizon to set. For about another week the moon appears at sunset closer and closer to the eastern horizon before setting in the west. On about the fifteenth day of its cycle, the moon appears at sunset on the eastern horizon. Its disk is completely full. The full moon then moves towards the western horizon during the night and the following morning, when the sun is rising in the east, the full moon is seen setting in the west.

For the second half of its cycle the moon becomes progressively thinner. Each day it rises later in the east before moving towards the west horizon. Approaching the end of its cycle, the waning moon is seen only in the early morning hours near the eastern horizon. Finally it disappears for a few days (New Moon) and then begins its cycle again in the west.

Many of the surviving Maya myths tell stories in which these celestial bodies are represented by actors. The sun is usually the focus of the story. In some Maya myths, the moon is personified as the wife of the sun and Venus is his brother. The relationships between the cycles of the sun, moon, and Venus are often reflected in the interactions between the actors who personify these bodies. For example, the stories concerning the promiscuous moon (the sun's wife) running away (or having sexual intercourse) with Venus (the sun's brother) refers to a conjunction of these two celestial bodies. In other myths, the moon is said to be the mother of the sun. In these myths, the mother cannot catch up with her son, a notion that seems to reflect the waxing moon's path across the sky, following the sun.

J. E. S. Thompson (1939:170) records the Kekchi-Mopan myth that the sun's elder brother becomes the morning star and his younger brother the evening star. In some cases, the sun has but one brother. I suggest that this apparent discrepancy between older and younger is explained by the fact that Venus as morning star is "born" before the sun; that is, it rises before the sun. However, as evening star, Venus is "born" after the sun sets. Thus, Venus could be both an older and younger brother of the sun.

The Popol Vuh *Actors*

D. Tedlock (1985) has argued that the hero twins episodes of the *Popol Vuh* are metaphors for the cycles of the sun, moon, and Venus, and that the establishment of these cycles represents the preparation of the world for inhabiting by man. Tedlock has identified the eastern and western ballcourts mentioned in the *Popol Vuh* as the locations of the first appearance of Venus as morning and evening star, respectively.

In my interpretation of the "Venus as evening star" compounds found in the hieroglyphic texts, this location is at a cave. I believe that the concept of a mythical ballcourt at the cave entrances on the horizon is reflected in the ballcourt glyph found in the Classic period texts. Generally speaking, Classic period ballcourts consisted of two parallel buildings with stepped sides (fig. 60). The ballgame was played between these buildings. The pictograph ballgame verb represents one of these buildings when it is viewed from the end (fig. 61a). A ball appears on the steps. The stepped side of the ballcourt is the same configuration as one-quarter of a quatrefoil cave opening. When a viewer stands at the end of a real ballcourt, the two buildings form half of the quatrefoil cave opening. Thus, when the Classic ruler played ball, he was symbolically playing ball at the cave entrance of the Underworld. At Copan, the ballcourt marker takes the shape of the full quatrefoil cave opening (fig. 61c). In this cave



Figure 60. Copan ballcourt.

mouth, two deities play ball. A tree grows beside the ballcourt, and the *kin* bowl from the rear head of the Venus/Sun monster appears at the base of the scene.

Let us begin the discussion of the *Popol Vuh* actors with a brief recapitulation of the episodes that concern us. One Hunahpu and his brother Seven Hunahpu are summoned to the Underworld after their ballplaying in the eastern ballcourt annoys the Lords of the Underworld. At the western ballcourt of the Underworld, they are sacrificed by the Lords. Seven Hunahpu and the headless body of One Hunahpu are buried there, but One Hunahpu's head is placed in a tree, which then bears fruit. When Blood Woman comes to the tree, the skull of One Hunahpu spits in her hand and impregnates her. She leaves the Underworld and eventually gives birth to the hero twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque. This birth occurs on a mountain. The hero twins also play ball at the eastern ballcourt and then journey to the Underworld. They defeat the Lords of the Underworld, and then



Figure 61. a. "Ballcourt" verb, Yaxchilan Structure 33; b. "ballcourt" verb, Tortuguero Monument 6; c. Copan ballcourt altar (after Barbara Fash).

Hunahpu and Xbalanque rise up and become the sun and moon, respectively.

The identification of the hero twins as the sun and the moon may seem at variance with other Maya myths, which present the moon as a woman. This apparent inconsistency has led some researchers to ignore this passage of the *Popol Vuh* and identify the hero twins as Venus and the sun, respectively (J. E. S. Thompson 1970; Lounsbury 1985; Schele & M. Miller 1986:48). The key to this problem lies in distinguishing between the phases of the moon. The only phase of the moon that is a visual twin of the sun is the full moon, and D. Tedlock (1985:46) has presented compelling arguments that Xbalanque is the full moon: "Contemporary Quiches regard the full moon as a nocturnal equivalent of the sun, pointing out that it has a full disk, is bright enough to travel by, and goes clear across the sky in the same time as the sun."

The interaction of sun and full moon creates a distinctive relationship. Once a month when the sun sets in the west, the full moon rises simultaneously in the east. The following morning when the full moon sets in the west, the sun simultaneously rises in the east. Thus the sun's setting visually gives rise to the full moon and vice versa.

This visual relationship appears to be echoed in the interaction of Hunahpu and Xbalanque. In one of the episodes in the Underworld, Hunahpu is decapitated during the night by a bat. However, before dawn his brother, Xbalanque, fashions a replacement head from a squash and places it on the headless body. At dawn they begin to play ball with the Lords of the Underworld using the real head of Hunahpu as the ball. Xbalanque knocks his brother's head into a stand of oak trees. A rabbit with instructions from Xbalanque pretends to be the bouncing ball and decoys the Lords away from Hunahpu's head. Xbalanque then replaces his brother's head and substitutes the squash for the ball. In this episode, Xbalanque has the ability to bring his brother back to life. In a further episode, D. Tedlock (1985:150) translates:

> Next they would sacrifice themselves, one of them dying for the other, stretched out as if in death. First they would kill themselves, but then they would suddenly look alive again. And this is the sacrifice of Hunahpu by Xbalanque. One by one his legs, his arms were spread wide. His head came off, rolled far away outside. His heart, dug out, was smothered in a leaf, and all the Xibalbans went crazy at the sight. So now, only one of them was dancing there: Xbalanque. "Get up!" he said, and Hunahpu came back to life. (D. Tedlock 1985:153).

The twins' ability to revive each other reflects the apparent interaction between the sun and the full moon.

Xbalanque can be translated as "Jaguar Sun" (Lounsbury 1985: 53).[9] The jaguar's association with the night is a pan-Mesoamerican concept based on the nocturnal habits of this creature. The jaguar usually resides in dens or caves during the day. He emerges with the sunset and retreats with the dawn, much like the full moon. Thus Tedlock's interpretation of Xbalanque as the full moon appears very acceptable.

D. Tedlock (1985:39) identified Blood Woman as a moon goddess. The moon goddess is associated with pregnancy, and also with weaving, which in Tzotzil is a metaphor for sexual intercourse (W. F. Morris, pers. comm., 1988). Thus Blood Woman, who has symbolic sexual intercourse with One Hunahpu and bears the hero twins Hunahpu and Xbalanque, is a good candidate for a moon goddess. In some Maya myths, the moon goddess is the mother of the sun, which fits Blood Woman's role as the mother of Hunahpu/sun.

Why then do two actors (Xbalanque and Blood Woman) represent the moon? The phases of the moon explain why Blood Woman gave birth to Xbalanque/full moon. Blood Woman's symbolic intercourse with One Hunahpu takes place when Blood Woman is in the Underworld. It corresponds to the moon phase of disappearance—that is, when the moon is in the Underworld or, as in the Yucatec expression, "in her cave." Blood Woman's sexual intercourse results in her pregnancy and her expulsion from the Underworld. This event represents the beginning of the waxing moon when it appears as a thin crescent in the west. On a visual level, the waxing moon is like the growing belly of a pregnant woman. Blood Woman as the waxing moon comes to full term and gives birth to Xbalanque/full moon and Hunahpu/sun. Given that eclipses occur only at disappearance and full moon, this episode concerning Blood Woman's pregnancy represents the cycle for lunar and solar eclipses.

The last two actors in these episodes of the *Popol Vuh* to be identified are the hero twins' father, One Hunahpu, and their uncle, his brother Seven Hunahpu. D. Tedlock has suggested that the skeletal head of One Hunahpu is Venus as evening star (1985:342). Although I agree with Tedlock's interpretation of the eastern and western ball courts as the location of first appearance of morning and evening star, respectively, I must disagree with his Venus identification for One Hunahpu. One Hunahpu is the father of the sun (Hunahpu), and there is no Maya mythology that implies that Venus is the father of the sun. Coe (1973:12) suggested that One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu were morning and evening star, respectively. Given that both brothers appear at the eastern and western ballcourts, I must also disagree with Coe's interpretation.

Whether as morning or evening star, Venus's first appearance always occurs on the horizon in association with the sun. The sibling

relationship between One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu, as well as their actions together in the eastern and western ballcourts, suggests that these two actors are good candidates for the brothers sun and Venus. Let us set aside for the moment the problem of identifying two actors with the sun.

In most Maya myths, the sun is the husband of the moon (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:242). One Hunahpu has intercourse with the moon goddess Blood Woman, and she bears his children. This suggests that One Hunahpu is the sun. Although Venus is said to dally with his brother's wife, he generally has no wife of his own. Seven Hunahpu also "has no wife, he is just a partner, just secondary, and he just remains a boy" (D. Tedlock 1985:105). Visually, Venus is secondary to the sun, and Seven Hunahpu has a secondary role in comparison to One Hunahpu. These celestial characteristics and narrative relationships suggest that Seven Hunahpu is associated with Venus and One Hunahpu with the sun.

Why then does the *Popol Vuh* have two actors (One Hunahpu and his son Hunahpu) who represent the sun? The problem is resolved by the roles they play. The episodes of One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu establish the cycle of the sun and Venus. The episodes concerning Hunahpu and Xbalanque establish the cycles of the sun and moon, and by extension of eclipses, within the already established cycle of the sun and Venus. Thus, it makes sense to have two actors who are identified with the sun.

The Twisted-Cord Jaguar Deity

There is a jaguar in the Classic inscriptions that is specifically related to the moon. I believe this jaguar is the animal form of the full moon. This jaguar, which has a twisted cord over its nose, is found as patron of the month Uo (fig. 62a), as the head variant for the number seven (fig. 62b), as one of the Paddler deities (fig. 62g) and as a variant of Glyph C of the Lunar Series (fig. 62e).

The clearest evidence of a lunar association for the twisted-cord jaguar is found in Glyph C. Glyph C is actually a series of mostly head variants that substitute for one another. The suffix attached to each head is the T683 cartouche, which I have interpreted to be the cenote of the moon. Schele (1985b) has divided Glyph C into three categories: moon goddess variants, jaguar variants, and skull variants (fig. 62d, e, f). The twisted-cord jaguar appears as one of the jaguar variants (fig. 62e). Schele (1985b) suggested that the lunar suffix found on these head variants acts not as a verbal affix but as a semantic determinative to indicate that these heads were some aspect of the moon.

In the beginning, according to Maya mythology, the sun and full moon were of equal brightness, but the moon had a rabbit thrown in its face to hide part of its brightness (J. E. S. Thompson

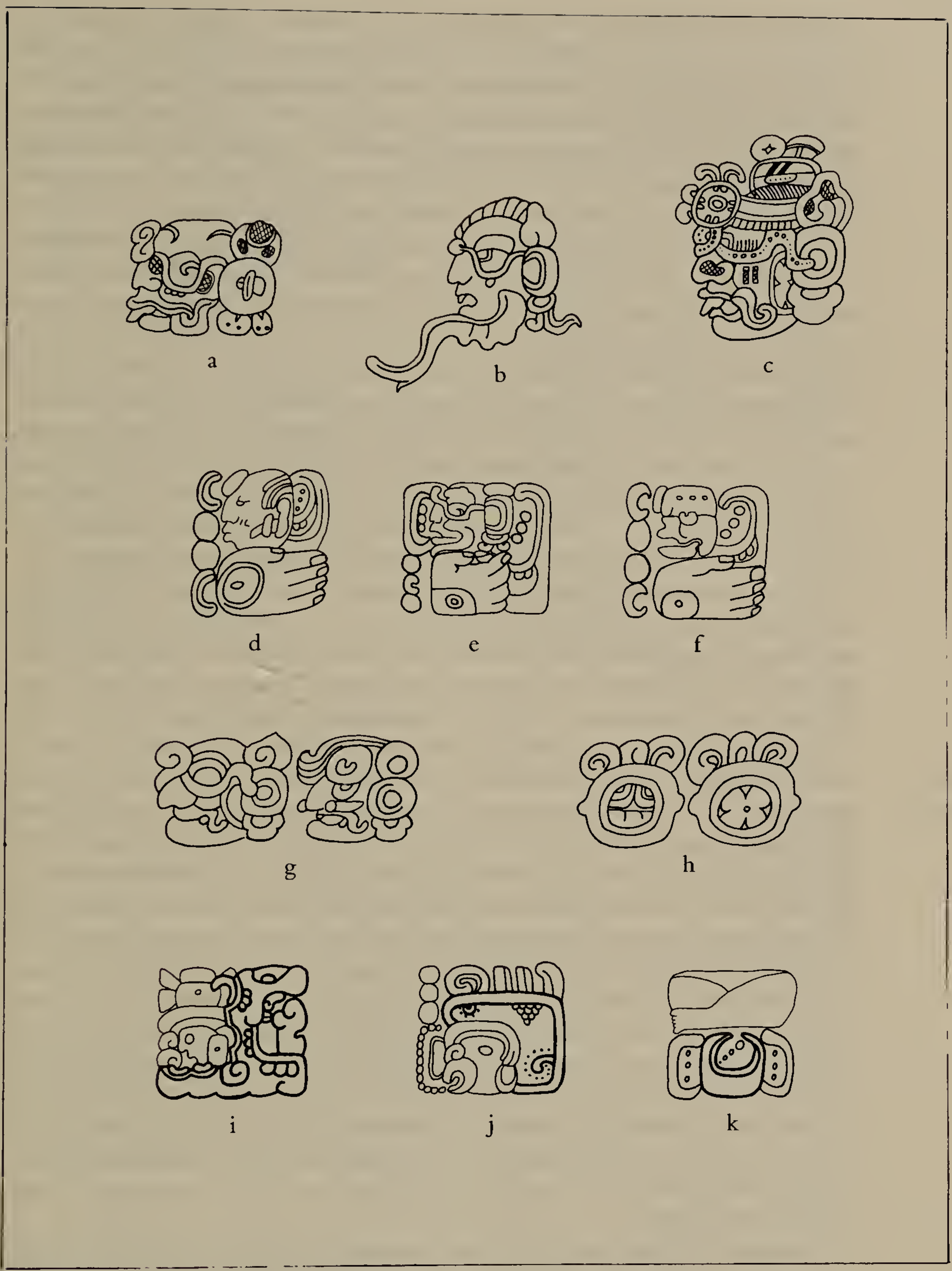


Figure 62. a. Patron of Uo, Copan Stela I; b. head variant of number seven, Quirigua Zoomorph B; c. "jaguar/sun" head, Tikal Stela 31; d. Glyph C of the Lunar Series, Palenque Tablet of the Cross; e. Glyph C of the Lunar Series, Quirigua Stela A; f. Glyph C of the Lunar Series, Piedras Negras Stela 3; g. nominal phrase of the Paddler deities, Tikal Stela 31; h. nominal phrase of the Paddler deities, Copan Stela 6; i. Glyph X, Quirigua Stela A; j. Glyph X, Piedras Negras Stela 3; k. Glyph X, Piedras Negras Stela 6.

1939), which caused the appearance of a rabbit outline on the face of the moon (Aveni 1980:68). Schele suggested that, like the rabbit face, the Maya also saw the three "faces" (moon goddess, jaguar, and skull) of Glyph C. The fact that the moon's cycle is divided into three phases (waxing, full, and waning), however, suggests that these three categories personify the different phases of the moon: moon goddess/waxing moon, jaguar/full moon, and skull/waning moon.[10]

During the Classic period, the twisted-cord jaguar was patron of the month Uo (J. E. S. Thompson 1950). In the Postclassic, Landa said that the festival for the month Uo ended with the "dance of the moon" (Tozzer 1941:154).

As one of the Paddlers, the twisted-cord jaguar occasionally has *akbal* 'night' infixes on his body, and the *akbal* sign inside a "paddle" cartouche substitutes for his name glyph. Thus, he is a jaguar associated with the night. On Tikal Stela 31, the jaguar and twisted-cord elements appear as the diagnostic elements of a head found attached to the ruler's belt. A *kin* element appears infixed in the cheek (fig. 62c). J. E. S. Thompson (1950) proposed that the jaguar elements referred to the sun deity's Underworld qualities and speculated that this deity was the personification of the sun as it traveled on its nightly journey through the Underworld. However, the combination of the jaguar and sun elements suggests an identification with Xbalanque 'Jaguar Sun' (full moon), who is, in effect, the night sun.

An association between the twisted cord and the moon is found on Bonampak Altar 3, where an actor with the twisted cord over his eyes sits in a moon cartouche/cenote and holds a rabbit in his hand (Proskouriakoff 1950:fig. 44; Greene 1967:pl. 51). In the *Popol Vuh,* Xbalanque (full moon) is assisted by the rabbit, a pan-Mesoamerican symbol associated with the moon. Barbara Tedlock (1982) has noted that a common practice among Quiche day keepers is sound play. An association between the twisted-cord jaguar and the full moon may be found in the term *balan,* which means both "twisted cord" and "hidden behind something" (Schele 1985c). I suggest that the twisted cord (hidden behind something) may refer to the full moon's hidden or dim quality during a lunar eclipse. Indeed, the Maya believe that one of the causes of an eclipse is a jaguar (J. E. S. Thompson 1970: 235). Another interpretation of the phrase "hidden behind something" might be that it refers to the full moon's dimness in comparison to the sun.

Hence, at the very least, the twisted-cord jaguar can be associated with the full moon and quite possibly also with an eclipsed moon. The twisted-cord jaguar is a feature on the central icon of the Tablet of the Sun and will be further discussed below under the identification of GIII of the Palenque Triad.

The traditional interpretation of the scene on Lords of the Underworld Vase 4 (Coe 1978) is that it represents the sacrifice of the baby jaguar deity by the axe-wielding actor while a skeletal Lord of the Underworld and his dog watch (Coe 1978:34; Robicsek & Hales 1981:40; Lounsbury 1985:75). It has been equated with the episode of the *Popol Vuh* in which the hero twins sacrifice each other in front of the Lords of the Underworld and their dog. However, the identification of the actor with the axe as Chac, the rain god, invalidates this analogy. Furthermore, I question whether the baby jaguar deity is a sacrificial victim. The raised axe of the Chac may indicate a sacrificial act, but there are other scenes on pottery vessels where an actor with an axe is cutting off his own head (Robicsek & Hales 1981:88), and where the axe-wielding Chac appears to have lost his hand (Schele & M. Miller 1986:311). Both scenes represent rather drastic forms of autosacrifice.

Let me offer a different interpretation of Vase 4. In this scene, a *cauac* monster (the personification of the cave) is turned on its side, with the cave opening on the right side and the *cauac* monster's mouth on the left (fig. 43). The *cauac* monster's mouth is lined with serpent scales. Chac, who is also marked with serpent scales on his legs, is framed by the mouth on the left. These serpent markings define Chac's location as inside his cave. Chac raises an axe in one hand and a ceremonial object in the other. In front of Chac, a jaguar deity in infantile form reclines on top of the *cauac* monster. In a head-first birth position, the baby jaguar deity points towards the direction of the cave opening. On the right side of the *cauac* monster, a skeletal deity with a "cleft" head is illustrated emerging from the cave (he still has one leg inside the quatrefoil cave opening of the *cauac* monster). A dog and firefly with a burning torch stand behind him (Coe 1978:34).

On the Temple of the Inscriptions Tablets, the "cleft T526 *cab* cave" verb, which refers to the first appearance of Venus as evening star, is followed by a portrait glyph of a skeletal head, which Lounsbury (1980) has associated with Venus as evening star. This skeletal Venus head is reminiscent of the skeletal deity on Vase 4 who has the "cleft" from the "cleft T526 *cab* cave" verb in the top of his head. I believe that the Vase 4 deity is a personification of Venus as evening star. AA Kerr 521

Evidence to support this belief is found in a comparison between this vase and Robicsek and Hales Vessel 120, which appears to have the same theme. As discussed in chapter 3, the scene on Vessel 120 illustrates a Chac inside the mouth of a cave (figs. 25, 26). Just as on Vase 4, Chac, who is conflated with the serpent, raises an axe. A growling water-lily jaguar deity comes forth from the mouth of the

cave above the Chac. The equivalency between the jaguars on these two vessels can be demonstrated by examining the way in which the Chac is illustrated in each image. On Vase 4, Chac has a human face, mouth, and eyes, in contrast to his regular zoomorphic form. In effect, he has been anthropomorphized. The baby jaguar deity is also in anthropomorphic form, with the chubby little body of a human baby. On Vessel 120, the Chac is illustrated with his regular zoomorphic face, and the jaguar is also zoomorphic. Hence, these two scenes have the same theme: a Chac raises an axe, and a jaguar deity leaves the cave (I suspect that he is born from the cave).

On Vessel 120, the verb of the upper text is the skeletal Venus head, followed by the "cleft T526 *cab* cave" sign, which refers to the first appearance of Venus as evening star. In other words, the text on Vessel 120 states that the birth of the jaguar occurred at the first appearance of Venus as evening star—that is, when Venus emerges from the Underworld. On Vase 4, the image of the skeletal Venus deity emerging from the cave supplies that information. In the *Popol Vuh* narrative, Seven Hunahpu, whom I identify as Venus, is left as a skeleton at the western ballcourt—an appearance that is reminiscent of the evening star skeletal deity described above. I believe that the dog in the Vase 4 scene is the dog of Maya mythology that assists souls across the water to the Underworld. In this case, the dog is assisting in the return from the Underworld. The firefly holds a torch to light the way out of the cave.

The water-lily jaguar found on Vessel 120 is found in other pottery scenes with a *kin* 'sun' sign infixed on his belly (Schele & M. Miller 1986:51), which suggests an identification with Jaguar Sun/full moon, the night sun. However, while the text on Vessel 120 states only that the emergence of the jaguar occurred at the same time as the first appearance of Venus as evening star, the juxtaposition of the jaguar and skeletal Venus deity on Vase 4 suggests that they occurred in conjunction, that is, in the same place. The water-lily jaguar does not fit the role of the full moon because the moon rises in the east, in opposition to the first appearance of Venus as evening star in the west. It is possible that the water-lily jaguar is the zoomorphic form of the waxing moon, which does appear for the first time on the western horizon, just as Venus as evening star does. The water-lily of this deity may associate it with the moon, for bodies of water (the home of the water-lily) are said to be the moon goddess's home.

It is tempting to identify this jaguar as some aspect of the moon, based on the intimate relationship between the rain god and the moon, but there is not enough evidence to equate the water-lily jaguar with the moon.

In summary then, the scenes on Vase 4 and Vessel 120 represent the emergence of a jaguar deity (who is possibly a moon deity) in

conjunction with a skeletal Venus deity (who represents the first appearance of Venus as evening star). In both scenes, this emergence is linked to the actions of Chac (who is the rain god).

The themes of modern Maya narratives and such colonial documents as the *Popol Vuh,* which focus on the actions of the sun, the moon, and Venus, are present in Classic Maya art. However, this reinterpretation of Lords of the Underworld Vase 4 demonstrates that while a similar theme may appear, we must not look for cartoon versions of these narratives.

The Astronomical Identities of GI and GIII

The Palenque Triad consists of three deities (GI, GII, and GIII). As discussed in chapter 1, these deities have been identified at one time or another with almost every celestial body. Given that the Cross Group Tablets illustrate the birth locations of these deities, it is reasonable to suggest that these locations might give a clue to the identities. I limit this discussion to the identities of GI and GIII, as I have found no evidence to suggest that GII had an astronomical association.

GIII

As discussed in the previous chapter, the nominal phrase of GIII consists of several compounds. The first is an *ahau* glyph partially covered by a jaguar skin. This sign is prefixed with the *ma k'ina* sign and translates as "great sun, jaguar-covered lord" or possibly "great sun-hidden lord." The second is the *k'inich* title followed by an undeciphered glyph (sun-faced, lord ?). GIII is also called *k'inich ahau* 'sun-faced lord' (E4, Temple of the Inscriptions, middle panel). GIII presents a most difficult problem because his nominal glyphs are not portraits; therefore, illustrations of GIII have not been identified.

Based on the *kin* 'sun' titles in GIII's name, Lounsbury identified GIII as the sun. However, these titles, "great sun-jaguar lord" and "sun-faced lord," can just as easily be applied to the full moon (the twin of the sun). In the *Popol Vuh,* the full moon is Xbalanque (Jaguar Sun). Jaguar Sun is certainly reminiscent of GIII's title, "great sun, jaguar-covered lord." The *k'inich ahau* 'sun-faced lord' title of GIII suggests that this deity has a face like the sun. This is certainly a good description of the full moon (the night sun). Furthermore, in the *Popol Vuh,* One Hunahpu/sun tells Blood Woman that sons have the "faces" of their fathers. Therefore, his son, Xbalanque/full moon, is a *k'inich ahau* 'sun-faced lord'.[11]

The twisted-cord jaguar identified above as the zoomorphic form of the moon is related to GIII in two ways. First, on the Tablet of the Sun, which illustrates the cave of *k'inich ahau*/GIII's birth, the twisted-cord jaguar is found on the shield of the central icon. Sec-

ond, during the festival for the month Uo for which the twisted-cord jaguar was the patron, the idol that was evoked was K'inich Ahau Itzamna.

Given this evidence, a reasonable case can be made that GIII is associated with the full moon, or some aspect of the full moon. I suspect that while the twisted-cord jaguar is the animal form of the full moon, GIII is its anthropomorphic form.

GI

The portrait glyph of GI does not have the obvious diagnostic traits of GII, which makes the identification of GI in other contexts difficult (fig. 5a). As noted in chapter 1, GI is a Roman-nosed, square-eyed deity with a fish barbel at the mouth and shell earring. This portrait glyph is remarkably similar to the *kin* head variant glyph (fig. 2b). GI has been equated with the anthropomorphic Chac on Vase 4 on the basis of the similar Roman nose and shell earring (Coe 1978; Schele & M. Miller 1986:49) (fig. 43). They are obviously related but nevertheless different, for GI does not carry the axe that appears in both the name glyph of the Chac and the T1030 Chac title.

GI's cave of birth on the Tablet of the Cross contains the rear head of the Venus/sun monster with the stylized ceiba tree behind it. As discussed in chapter 3, this cave is associated with both the sun and Venus. The sky band/cave passage on which Chan Bahlum stands includes moon, Venus, and sun signs. The ceiba tree as a symbol of lineage descent suggests an association with the sun, for the sun is referred to as "our father, our grandfather."

As noted in chapter 1, Lounsbury (1985) identified the brothers GI and GIII as prototypes of the hero twins. The above discussion provides good evidence for this position, if we assume D. Tedlock's interpretation that the hero twins are sun and full moon rather than Lounsbury's position that they are Venus and sun.

In the *Popol Vuh,* the episodes of One Hunahpu (the father) and Seven Hunahpu (the uncle) are told as background information for the foreground births of the brothers Hunahpu and Xbalanque. The foregrounded events of the "mythological" portion of the Cross Group story are the births of the GI and GIII. Therefore, both stories appear to focus on the central theme of the birth of two brothers.

GI and GIII are born four days apart, and they are stated to be the children of Lady Beastie.[12] Thus they are at least brothers and perhaps close enough to be twins. GI is named after his father, GI Senior (see chapter 7), just as Hunahpu is named after his father, One Hunahpu. In the text, when GI and GIII are named as joint subjects or objects, GI's name always precedes his brother's, just as Hunahpu always precedes his brother Xbalanque in the *Popol Vuh.* Thus if GI and GIII are the prototypes for the hero twins, GI would be equiva-

lent to Hunahpu (sun) and GIII to Xbalanque (full moon). This identification certainly fits the imagery found on both the Tablet of the Cross and the Tablet of the Sun. If GI and GIII have an astronomical identity, I would be inclined to identify them tentatively as aspects of sun and full moon, respectively.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the important roles that caves played in the world view of the Maya. There is evidence for the concept of four mythological caves on the horizon that were the homes of the sun, the moon, and Venus as well as the rain/lightning/thunder and wind gods. I believe that these caves were thought to be the source not only of the wind and rain, but also of maize. By extension, they were the ultimate source of flint and obsidian, which were thought to be produced by the lightning from the caves.

It appears that real caves within the Classic Maya community were seen as the local versions of these mythological caves. The local caves were the location of ritual activities, including ceremonial circuits, based on the calendar.

The evidence discussed here also demonstrates that at least some of the deities of the cave have astronomical aspects. I am reasonably certain that the Vase 4 skeletal deity and the twisted-cord jaguar are personifications of Venus as evening star and of the full moon, respectively. Given the analogy with the *Popol Vuh,* it is likely that GI and GIII are the sun and the full moon or that they are related to those celestial bodies.

The next chapter examines a set of monuments that illustrate pre-accession and accession events. On these occasions, the lord journeyed to three separate caves to perform various rituals associated with specific deities. These journeys appear to represent another kind of ritual circuit.

7

Pre-accession Themes

These people also made use of certain characters or letters, with which they wrote in their books their ancient matters and their sciences, and by these and by drawings and by certain signs in these drawings, they understood their affairs.
—Bishop Diego de Landa

We have little knowledge of the activities illustrated in Classic Maya images, and limited decipherment of the events stated in the text. In consequence, the story being told is often unclear to us, as are the ramifications of that story. Comparative analysis can aid in our effort to comprehend Maya stories. For example, a great deal of information about Maya elite rituals of the Classic period can be obtained by comparing stories with similar story lines and images with similar themes. This is the method I will use in this chapter.

By applying Josserand's model of episodes, and treating the scene as a whole composition, I will analyze a series of monuments that appear to have the same theme and story line: the Cross Group Tablets, the Palace Tablet, the Tablet of the Slaves, the Oval Palace Tablet, the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet, and the Temple XIV Tablet from Palenque, as well as Yaxchilan Stela 11. In doing so, I will identify a series of pre-accession events for the rulers Chan Bahlum II, Kan Xul II, Pacal II, Chaacal III, and Bird Jaguar IV, as well as the secondary lords, Chac Zotz and Xoc.

First lineage events have already been identified for Chan Bahlum II, Kan Xul II, Xoc, and Chaacal III (Lounsbury 1976:220, 1980;

Schele 1984). I will identify first lineage events for the remaining lords, and a second set of pre-accession events for the rulers Chan Bahlum II, Kan Xul II, and Bird Jaguar IV. The latter will be referred to as the *second lineage events.* Furthermore, I will demonstrate that the location of these rituals was a cave.

First Lineage Events

The Cross Group Tablets

We have seen that in order to read the stories on the Yaxchilan Lintels the viewer had to move from doorway to doorway in the building. The story told in the Cross Group Tablets at Palenque required the viewer to move from building to building. These three tablets form a continuous story, which constitutes the longest and most complex piece of Classic period literature to have survived to the present day. The rhythmic repetition and variation used in this story, both in the image and in the text, create a composition of great sophistication and eloquence.

More than forty dates and events are stated in the texts of the Cross Group Tablets. A simple chronological listing of these events destroys not only the narrative quality and poetic structure of the text, but also the meaning of the story.[1] The reading order of the three tablets is determined by the chronological reading order of the dates found at the beginning and end of each main text. This order is: Tablet of the Cross (TC), Tablet of the Sun (TS), and Tablet of the Foliated Cross (TFC) (table 2).[2]

The following breakdown of the Cross Group story into sections and episodes was provided by Kathryn Josserand (pers. comm., 1986). Josserand (1987) has demonstrated that the reading order of each tablet is the caption text first, followed by the main text.

Table 2
Initial Series and Closing Dates from the Main Texts of the Cross Group Tablets

Tablet	First Date	Last Date
Tablet of the Cross	12.19.13.4.0 8 Ahau 18 Tzec 7 December, 3121 B.C.	9.6.18.5.12 10 Eb 0 Uo 8 April, A.D. 572
Tablet of the Sun	1.18.5.3.6 13 Cimi 19 Ceh 24 October, 2360 B.C.	9.10.10.0.0 13 Ahau 18 Kankin 6 December, A.D. 642
Tablet of the Foliated Cross	1.18.5.4.0 1 Ahau 13 Mac 8 November, 2360 B.C.	9.13.0.0.0 8 Ahau 8 Uo 18 March, A.D. 692

Tablet of the Cross

As discussed in chapter 5, the image on the TC illustrates the birth site of GI (fig. 51). Clancy (1986) has pointed out that the two actors do not interact but instead focus their attention on the central icon. The narrative begins with the block of caption text in the upper left corner, which states the first lineage event of the six-year-old Chan Bahlum II on 9.10.8.9.3 9 Akbal 6 Xul (17 June, A.D. 641). Chan Bahlum II's name phrase is elaborate and includes several titles and a parentage statement. In order to read this sentence the eye is led directly to the short actor. This convention identifies this actor and his action as the subject and event of the text.

The next sentence of the caption text begins below the object that the young Chan Bahlum II holds. It begins with a Distance Number, which moves the time frame of the story forward to an event that occurred the following year on 9.10.10.0.0 13 Ahau 18 Kankin (6 December, A.D. 642).[3] Because this event is consistently tied to the first lineage event of Chan Bahlum in this narrative, I suspect that it should be viewed either as part of the first lineage event or as a consequence of it.

The reader then moves to the next sentence of the narrative, which begins at the block of text in front of the right actor's face. This sentence ends at the first glyph in the block of text behind him. It states the 8 Oc 3 Kayab (10 January, A.D. 684) accession of Chan Bahlum II. On this date Chan Bahlum II was forty-nine years old. In order to read the name of the subject, the viewer's eye must move across the face of the actor. This device identifies the right actor as Chan Bahlum II on the occasion of his accession.

The final sentences are located in the block of text behind the older Chan Bahlum II. Beginning at the second glyph in this block, these sentences tie the accession to two implied dates from the 2 Cib series (9.12.18.5.16 and 9.12.18.5.19, or A.D. 690), which name GI and Chan Bahlum II as subjects, respectively.[4]

Kubler (1969:18–22) first noted that each Cross Group Tablet illustrates the same two actors, one tall and one short. He correctly identified the tall actor on all three tablets as Snake Jaguar (Chan Bahlum II), the protagonist of the monument, on the basis of Chan Bahlum II's name in the sentence of the caption text adjacent to the tall actor (Kubler 1972). This sentence states the accession of Chan Bahlum II when he was forty-nine years old. Kubler identified the short actor on all three tablets as "he of the pyramid," based on the appearance of a "pyramid" glyph in the caption text adjacent to the short actor. However, it is now known that this glyph is a verb and not a subject. Kubler further suggested that this short actor was

an emissary from the highlands because of his warmer looking, highland-style clothes.

Schele (1976:13) identified the short actor on all three tablets as Chan Bahlum II's father, Pacal II, based on the presence of Pacal II's name glyph in this first lineage event sentence. Later studies by Jones (1977) and Schele, Mathews, and Lounsbury (1977) have shown that the subject of this first lineage event sentence is Chan Bahlum II. Pacal II's name appears only as part of Chan Bahlum II's parentage statement. Parentage statements are extensions to the name phrase of the subject and are used to elaborate the name of the subject. An equivalent expression in English would be: "Persis, the child of Jane, is an archaeologist." There is no doubt that it is Persis (the subject) who is the archaeologist—that is, Persis is the subject of the sentence.

Schele interpreted the scene as representing the transfer of power from the dead Pacal II to his son. Assuming that the accession of Chan Bahlum II was the illustrated event, she speculated that the differences in size and dress between the two actors were indicators that the small actor was acting after death. She identified the small actor's costume as being similar to the costume worn by deities and suggested that Pacal II had undergone some transformation after death that entitled him to wear what Schele called "signs of divinity." However, living rulers and young lords are illustrated in various scenes wearing the costume of deities, so this clothing cannot be taken as an indication that the small actor is dead.

Clancy (1986) formally analyzed the composition of the Cross Group and noted that the actions of the actors were not consistent with Schele's interpretation of power transfer. Clancy identified the small actor as the deity GI. However, the name glyph of GI is a portrait of a deity with a square eye, Roman nose, and shell earring. The portrait of the small actor, on the other hand, is clearly human.

Kubler's original method of identification was correct: the caption text in association with the actor should name the actor. The different dates in the caption text create movement in time. By reading the caption text, the reader is led through time from the left side of the image (the first lineage event) to the right side (the accession). Two actions are illustrated, which occurred at the same location but not at the same time. Depicting two separate actions by the same actor in one scene can be confusing to the viewer. Hence, the artist has taken great care in the placement of the glyph blocks to ensure that the reader would understand from the caption text when, who, and what was being illustrated. The mirror-like symmetry of the central icon divides the image into two spaces and two time frames.[5]

David Morales, an artist at Palenque, has pointed out to me that the short actor has the same drooping lower lip as the tall actor. Fur-

thermore, on Yaxchilan Lintel 2, Shield Jaguar II is portrayed at the age of five years with adult proportions but 23 percent shorter than his father who is pictured to the right (fig. 16). In the TC image, the young Chan Bahlum II has the proportions of an adult body, but he is 25 percent shorter than the older Chan Bahlum (fig. 51). Therefore this illustration of the young Chan Bahlum II fits a device used elsewhere in Maya art to depict a child in relation to an adult.[6]

Following the reading of the caption text, the viewer moves to the main text, which formally opens the story with an Initial Series date that is before the beginning of the current era (fig. 51). On all three tablets the time frame of the main text begins in mythological time on the left side and then moves to historical time on the right side. On the TC, the mythological portion of the main text begins some thirty-six hundred years before the birth of the protagonist (Chan Bahlum II), on the date 7 December, 3121 B.C. The event on this date is the birth of a female deity who was nicknamed by Lounsbury (1976, 1985) as "Lady with the Upturned Snout" or "Lady Beastie." Although her birth is elaborated by an Initial Series date and 819-day count, it is marked with an AEI as background information for the events to follow.

A new section immediately begins in the next sentence when the time frame backs up one year, to the birth of a male deity on 16 June, 3122 B.C. This deity has been nicknamed GI Senior (Lounsbury 1980, 1985). His birth is tied to an event on 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ahau 8 Cumku (13 August, 3114 B.C.), referred to as the "era event." This date is the beginning of the Maya Long Count and may represent the time when the earth was thought to have been created.[7]

The era event is then restated and tied to the series of events by GI Senior on 13.0.1.9.2 13 Ik end of Mol (5 February, 3112 B.C.). This series includes a "God N" event, a "sky" event, a "house" event, and a "north serpent" event. Although there has been much speculation about what these events represent, no clear understanding has been established. However, they may be the divine model for the 2 Cib events of Chan Bahlum II, which involve an "inverted sky" event, a "God N" event, a "house" event, and a "fish-in-hand/serpent" event.

The time frame returns to the era event, and the story ties the era event in 3114 B.C. to the birth of GI Junior on 20 October, 2360 B.C. GI Junior is the first-born god of the Palenque Triad, who has been referred to in this study simply as GI. GI is stated to be the child of Lady Beastie, who would have been a mere 760 years old at the time of her son's birth.

In the next sentence, the story returns to the birth of Lady Beastie (3121 B.C.) and then states her accession some eight hundred years later.[8] From there, the time frame moves forward over thirteen hundred years to the birth (993 B.C.) and accession (967 B.C.) of a

ruler named U K'ix Chan. The accession of U K'ix Chan is followed by the birth (955 B.C.) and accession (921 B.C.) of Kuk I, who was presumably his son.[9] The story also includes an implied pre-accession event by Kuk I at the age of twenty-two.[10]

Although Lady Beastie is about eight hundred years old on the occasion of her accession, the ruler U K'ix Chan appears to be mortal, for he acceded to the throne at the age of twenty-six. Given the date of his son's accession, he would have been no more than seventy-two years old at his death. U K'ix Chan is named with both the bird variant and bone variant of the Palenque emblem glyph. It seems likely that U K'ix Chan was a mythological figure who was considered the first male ruler of Chan Bahlum II's lineage.

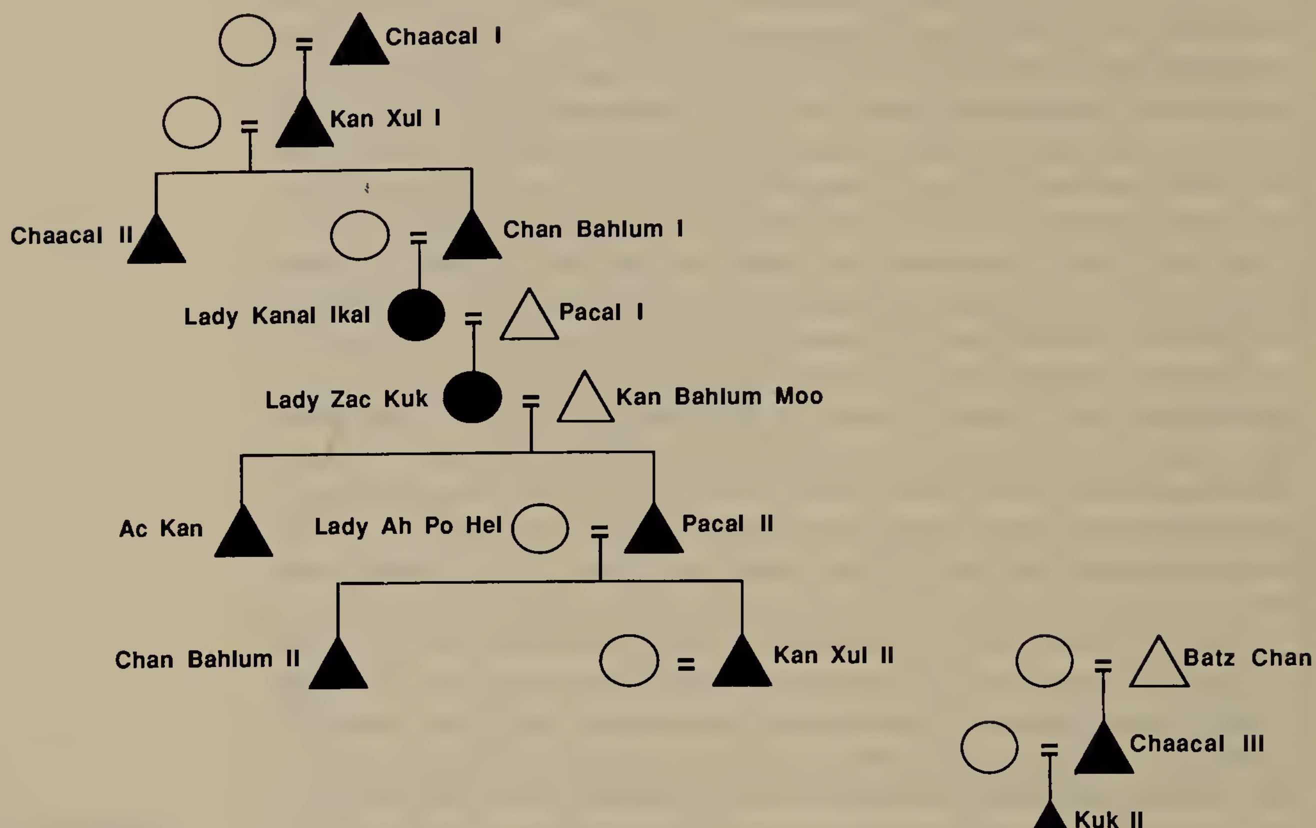
The time frame then moves forward another thirteen hundred years and gives the birth (A.D. 422) and the accession (A.D. 435) of the ruler Casper. Casper's accession is tied to the Period Ending 9.0.0.0.0, which occurred just 123 days after his accession. The story then continues with the births and accessions of the rulers Manik, Chaacal I, Kan Xul I, and Chaacal II. Their births are all marked with AEIs and serve as background information to their corresponding accessions. The main text ends with the birth (A.D. 524) and accession (A.D. 572) of Chan Bahlum I, as well as an implied, pre-accession event. This event occurred when Chan Bahlum I was about eighteen years old. The time frame of the TC main text ends some sixty-three years before the birth of Chan Bahlum II. The historical rulers introduced in this narrative appear to be ancestors of Chan Bahlum II (see table 3).

In summary, the TC caption text sets the "historical" time frame, introduces the protagonist (Chan Bahlum II), and outlines the heart of the story—Chan Bahlum's first lineage event, accession, and 2 Cib events. The main text gives the divine and ancestral models for that story.

Two story lines are presented in the main text. One story line concerns the birth of GI Senior, his events, and the birth of GI. The image illustrates the birth site of GI. Hence, the birth of GI provides the background and setting for the historical events of the image. The other story line of the TC main text deals with a series of ancestral rulers whose accessions are tied to the accession of Lady Beastie. This second story line appears to demonstrate that the rulers of Chan Bahlum II's lineage acquired their right to rule from Lady Beastie.

This situation appears to be at odds with the overwhelming evidence that the Maya practiced a patrilineal descent for succession of office (Hopkins, in press). However, on the Temple of the Inscriptions Tablets, Chan Bahlum II's grandmother, Lady Zac Kuk, is stated to have taken the throne (Lounsbury 1976). Following Lady Zac Kuk's accession was the accession of her son, Pacal II, and then

Table 3
Genealogy of the Rulers of Palenque as Proposed by Karen Bassie-Sweet



Graphic by C. Kincaid

of her grandson, Chan Bahlum II. The model presented for the mythological passage of power from Lady Beastie to U K'ix Chan to Kuk I parallels the historical passage of power from Lady Zac Kuk to Pacal II to Chan Bahlum II. Lady Zac Kuk is even named with the same nominal phrase as Lady Beastie. Hence the artist presented a story line that justifies Chan Bahlum II's irregular descent of succession (this descent line is discussed in the appendix).

Tablet of the Sun

The story continues on the TS, where Chan Bahlum II is now illustrated at the cave site of GIII's birth. The caption text again begins with Chan Bahlum II's first lineage event located directly above the young Chan Bahlum II's head (fig. 53). The second sentence, which is located in the same block of text, again states the 9.10.10.0.0 Period Ending on 13 Ahau 18 Kankin (6 December, A.D. 642), and Chan Bahlum II is the subject. In the middle of the tablet, between the two crossed spears and above the shield, is the third sentence, which states the accession of Chan Bahlum II. Although not directly

adjacent to the older Chan Bahlum II, it is the closest caption text to this actor.

In the scenes on Classic Maya monuments, one side of the image is often emphasized more than the other. In the TC image, neither the left nor the right side of the image appears to be emphasized. On the TS, however, the left side of the image and its caption text are emphasized by the use of several literary and visual devices.

The emphasis on the left side is accomplished on a literary level by tying the first lineage event to the Period Ending event. This makes the left caption text a more elaborate statement than the right caption text. On a visual level, the right caption text referring to the older Chan Bahlum II has been placed between the two spears, somewhat away from the actor it identifies (fig. 53). This keeps the visual focus on the left side of image. The young Chan Bahlum II stands on a figure who pushes him upward, lifting the young lord higher off the ground. The older Chan Bahlum II stands on a figure who is crouched down with a heavy burden. This may reflect their difference in weight, but also visually it emphasizes the younger Chan Bahlum II, who is holding a raised object. Furthermore, the right spear subtly overlaps the older Chan Bahlum II, while the main text overlaps his headdress. The younger Chan Bahlum II overlaps the shield feather. Although the space is shallow, this overlapping places the young Chan Bahlum II on the plane closest to the viewer.

The emphasis on the first lineage event on the TS is maintained even in comparison to the first lineage event illustrated on the TC. On the TC, the young Chan Bahlum II stands in a passive position. On the TS, however, he holds a presentation shield up above his shoulders, which serves to place emphasis on him.

Continuing the story, the reader then moves to the main text, which begins with an elaborate Initial Series date and the birth of the deity GIII (25 October, 2360 B.C.) (fig. 53). In the next sentence, the time frame backs up to the era event (3114 B.C.) and then restates GIII's birth. The narrative states that he is the child of Lady Beastie. Chronologically, GIII's birth comes only four days after the birth of his brother, GI.

At this point, the narrative begins a new section by again backing up to the era event (3114 B.C.) and tying this event by an enormous Distance Number to the foreground 2 Cib events (A.D. 690). Following the 2 Cib episode, the time frame then backs up five generations to the first lineage event of Kan Xul I, on 20 November, A.D. 496. Kan Xul is the great-great-great-grandfather of Chan Bahlum II (see appendix). The text ties Kan Xul I's event to the first lineage event of the protagonist, Chan Bahlum II, on 17 June, A.D. 641.[11] The story continues with an event that occurred on the summer solstice (22 June), just five days after Chan Bahlum II's first lineage

event. Because the solstice event is tied to the first lineage event by a *hel* Distance Number, these two events should be treated as a unit.

In the concluding episode, the time frame backs up six years to the birth of Chan Bahlum II on 22 May, A.D. 635, and ties his birth to his first lineage event. It then ties the solstice ritual of his first lineage event to the Period Ending 9.10.10.0.0 13 Ahau 18 Kankin (6 December, A.D. 642). The main text has greatly expanded the information about the first lineage event. The peak event of the TS main text is the first lineage event.

Each main text has unique historical events that do not occur in the other main texts. On the TS, the unique event of the main text is the first lineage event. This event is also the action emphasized in the image.

Tablet of the Foliated Cross

The reader then moves to the TFC image, where Chan Bahlum II is illustrated performing rituals at the cave site of GII's birth (fig. 31). The actors have reversed positions in this image, and the older Chan Bahlum II now appears on the left. The caption text that begins behind him declares his accession on 8 Oc 3 Kayab (10 January, A.D. 684). Again, by reading this sentence of the caption text, the viewer's eye is led to the illustration of the action. The next sentence is found in front of Chan Bahlum II and is undeciphered. This event is framed by the plant foliage and separated from Chan Bahlum II's body. The third sentence is found on the right, framing the young Chan Bahlum II. Although it lacks a Calendar Round date, it states Chan Bahlum II's first lineage event in couplet form. If the TFC were an isolated monument, the lack of a Calendar Round date would indicate that the time frame had not yet changed. However, the previous two illustrations of the first lineage event have established the date of this event, so it should be clear to the reader that the time frame has changed.

Josserand (in press) has demonstrated that sentences can have special grammatical constructions called *fronting,* where the emphasized element is placed at the beginning of the phrase. Chan Bahlum II's accession has, in effect, been "fronted" in a manner analogous to the grammatical process. This device places emphasis on the accession. Just as the left caption text of the TS is elaborated with a second sentence (the 9.10.10.0.0 Period Ending), the left caption text of the TFC is also elaborated with a second sentence. In contrast to the left caption text, the right caption text does not even carry a Calendar Round to emphasize it. On the TC, the bird looks to the right—that is, to the continuation of the text. The TFC bird looks directly at the older Chan Bahlum II, which reinforces the focus on the left side of the tablet.

The older Chan Bahlum II is dressed in the costume of the Tonsured Maize god (Taube 1985). This costume is in stark contrast to the plain costume he wore during the other two rituals. Although this may reflect the different nature of the various rituals, elaboration of costume is one of the devices Maya artists used to place emphasis on an actor. Hence, the accession is the emphasized event of this image.

Moving to the Initial Series of the TFC main text, the story continues with the birth of the deity GII on 8 November, 2360 B.C. (fig. 31). This birth is given as background information and it occurs fourteen days after the birth of GIII as given on the TS. Unlike GI and GIII, GII is not named as the child of Lady Beastie. GII is further distinguished from GI and GIII in that GI's and GIII's births are stated as foregrounded events, while the birth of GII is only stated as background information.

The text continues in an unusual fashion with a Distance Number whose components are stated in the order of an Initial Series date. Initial Series notations give the number of baktuns, katuns, tuns, uinals, and kins, while Distance Numbers reverse this order and give the kin position first.[12] This "Initial Series" Distance Number ties the birth of GII to the Period Ending event by Lady Beastie on 2.0.0.0.0 2 Ahau 3 Uayeb (18 February, 2325 B.C.). This event is recorded with the "fish-in-hand" expression.

The historical portion of the main text follows. It begins with a Distance Number, again in the form of an Initial Series, leading to the 2 Cib events.[13] The next episode opens with the time frame backing up fifty-five years to the birth of Chan Bahlum II. The story ties the birth of Chan Bahlum II to his accession. In turn, the accession is tied to the 2 Cib events. The closing sentence ties the Period Ending 9.13.0.0.0 8 Ahau 8 Uo (18 March, A.D. 692) to the 2 Cib events (A.D. 690). The peak event of the TFC main text is the 2 Cib events. A clear understanding of the importance of the 2 Cib events to Chan Bahlum II's first lineage event and accession must await better decipherment of the 2 Cib event verbs.

On the TFC, the "unique" event of the main text is the accession, which is also the emphasized action in its image. Hence, the accession rituals at the cave of GII have been deliberately emphasized on this tablet.

In summary, the story of the Cross Group Tablets is a presentation of three important events in Chan Bahlum II's life—his first lineage event, accession and 2 Cib event. The artist chose to elaborate the first two of these events by illustrating three separate rituals that occurred on each of these occasions. Of the three rituals conducted on the occasion of the first lineage event, the artist emphasized the ritual enacted at the cave of GIII, and for the accession, he empha-

sized the ceremony at GII's cave. The mythological birth of three deities is given as background information in the text, and the cave locations of these births are the settings for Chan Bahlum's ceremonies.

Tablet of the Slaves

Schele (1978) identified both actions on the Cross Group Tablet of the Sun as occurring at the accession of Chan Bahlum II. Noting the similarity of the object being held by the small actor to the objects held by the females on the Palace Tablet and Tablet of the Slaves, Schele (1978) identified these images as accession scenes as well. Comparing the object held by the males on these two tablets with that held by the female on the Oval Palace Tablet, she identified the Oval Palace Tablet as the accession monument of Pacal II. Although I disagree with the identification of these events as accession, I believe that Schele has accurately identified these monuments as other instances of the same event carried out by the small actor on the Tablet of the Sun.

The Tablet of the Slaves at Palenque illustrates a central male actor flanked by a male actor and female actor (fig. 63). The caption text consists of two short sentences that are divided into two blocks of text (I1–K1 and L1–L3). These sentences name the flanking actors (Schele 1978). The identities of these actors in relation to the central actor are discussed later in this chapter. As there is no caption text that refers to the central actor, we must look to the main text for the sentence that identifies him and the action of the image.

The main text, which runs across the top of the image, has been divided into four episodes (Josserand, in press). The first episode of the main text can be divided into three short sentences. The first (A1–B1) states the accession (A.D. 613) of the ruler Pacal II, who is named with the *ma k'ina* title. The second sentence (A2–B2) states the accession (A.D. 684) of the ruler Chan Bahlum II. At A3, the third sentence states the accession (A.D. 702) of the ruler Kan Xul II. The accession of Pacal II is stated using a Calendar Round date. However, the Calendar Round notations for both Chan Bahlum II and Kan Xul II are deleted. Chan Bahlum II's accession is stated as being three katun endings (sixty years) after Pacal II's accession, and Kan Xul's accession is stated as being one katun ending (twenty years) after Chan Bahlum II's (Lounsbury, cited in Schele 1985b). The emphasized sentence of the first episode is Pacal II's accession, for his sentence carries the Calendar Round and title.

The second episode backs up in time to the birth of Chac Zotz (the protagonist of the story), which occurred during the reign of Pacal II. This is probably why the text begins with the accession of Pacal II and continues forward through the two successive rulers. Episode one sets the stage for the events of episode two.



Figure 63. Tablet of the Slaves (drawing courtesy Merle Greene Robertson).

Palenque Slaves Tablet

The second epidode is also divided into three sentences. The first sentence begins at B3 and can be paraphrased as: "It was about (the uinals and kins are deleted) eleven tuns and two katuns since the birth of Chac Zotz on 7 Caban 15 Kayab (25 January, A.D. 671) until the 'mirror bundle' event [accession] of Chaacal III on 9 Ik 5 Kayab [3 January, A.D. 722]."[14] The birth of Chac Zotz is marked with the AEI as background information, and the accession of Chaacal III is marked with the PEI as the main event of the sentence. This is an unusual sentence, for there are no other examples where the birth of one individual is tied to the accession of another. The next sentence begins at D1; the event it states occurred a year and a half later. It states the "smoking mirror bundle" event by Chac Zotz on 8 Ix 7 Yaxkin (19 June, A.D. 723). Although Chac Zotz was fifty-two years old on the occasion of his "smoking mirror bundle" event, it is still the first noted event in his life—that is, his first lineage event. This first lineage event for Chac Zotz uses the same "smoking mirror bundle" verb that is used on the Tablet of the Foliated Cross for Chan Bahlum's first lineage event. Later in this narrative, Chac Zotz is referred to as a cahal. It seems likely that if potential rulers went through pre-accession rituals in order to prepare them for hereditary offices, then potential cahals would also have pre-accession preparations.

The third sentence begins at C3, and it states an event that occurred about two years later. The verb is an "axe" event of unknown meaning and is followed by the phrase *u cab Chac Zotz*. Both verbs have AEIs to mark them as background information.

The story continues at F1 with episode three, which contains a capture, another "axe event" with the *u cab Chac Zotz* phrase, and an undeciphered event. In this episode Chac Zotz is named as a cahal (G2b) (Mathews, pers. comm.; D. Stuart 1983, 1986c). Episode four concludes the story with a Period Ending, an undeciphered event (G4b) that includes a "bundle-in-hand *na*" compound (H4a), and the third katun anniversary of Chac Zotz's birth. The only subject named in all of these events is Chac Zotz. The verb at G4b has been categorized by Stuart as a dedication event (cited in Schele 1989).

The central question is which of these events is illustrated in the image. In the image, both flanking actors are handing objects to the central actor. However, the central actor is turned towards the male, which emphasizes the left side of the image. A breakdown of the main text into episodes reveals that the second episode frames this emphasized left action (fig. 64a). In fact, the text of the second episode intrudes into this area of emphasis. The "jester god" headdress which the male hands the central actor is even overlapped by the text of the second episode (B5).

The only events of episode two that are on the event line of the story are the accession of the ruler Chaacal III and the "smoking mir-



Palenque Slaves Tablet

a

b

Palenque D.O. Tablet

Figure 64. Top. Framing convention, Tablet of the Slaves (drawing courtesy Merle Greene Robertson); Bottom. framing convention, Dumbarton Oaks Tablet (drawing courtesy Linda Schele).

ror bundle" event of Chac Zotz (the birth, the "axe" event, and the *u cab* event by Chac Zotz are all marked with the AEI as background information). As Chac Zotz is the central subject of the episode, we would expect him to be the central actor of the image and the illustrated action to be his foregrounded "smoking mirror bundle" event. The appearance of the ruler Chaacal III in an eposide that is otherwise concerned only with Chac Zotz may be simply indicating that Chac Zotz's first lineage event occurred during Chaacal III's reign, or it may indicate that, for Chac Zotz, the direct result of Chaacal III's accession was Chac Zotz's first lineage event. Because many of the events of the Tablet of the Slaves story are not yet deciphered, the meaning of the entire story is not yet apparent.

Thus, we have been told a story about Chac Zotz that begins with the accession of Pacal II, during whose reign Chac Zotz is born, and ends with the third katun anniversary of Chac Zotz's birth. An event from that story, his first lineage event, has been illustrated. Within the episode of the first lineage event, which physically frames the action of the image, Chaacal III's accession is foregrounded not only because he is the ruler but also because his event appears to set the stage for Chac Zotz's first lineage event. The discussion of the location of the first lineage event will be deferred until later in the chapter.

Palace Tablet

The image on the Palace Tablet at Palenque appears to be similar in composition and structure to the Tablet of the Slaves (fig. 56). Josserand has demonstrated that on the Cross Group Tablets the reading order of the text is first the caption text and then the main text (Josserand 1987). Assuming the same convention for the Palace Tablet, the story begins with the image and caption text. The image illustrates an actor on the left who is leaning forward, handing the central actor a "jester god" headdress. A female actor sits to the right of the central actor and extends a shield. Two blocks of caption text appear on either side of the central actor. The first sentence of the caption text (S1–S4) states the birth of Xoc (27 February, A.D. 650). It is marked with the AEI as background information. The second sentence, which begins at S5 and ends in the block of text (T1–Y) to the right of the central actor, states Xoc's first lineage event (14 June, A.D. 706). To read this sentence the viewer's eye must move diagonally across the body of the central actor. This securely identifies the central actor as Xoc and the illustrated action as his first lineage event.

The reader then moves to the main text where the time frame backs up to an Initial Series date before the birth of Xoc and thus begins a new section. The main text is divided into five episodes. The

backgrounded birth of the ruler Kan Xul II is the initial event of the main text (5 November, A.D. 644). Kan Xul II's name phrase includes an elaborate parentage statement declaring that he is the child of the ruler Pacal II and Lady Ahpo Hel. The story then moves by a Distance Number to his first lineage event at age seven (19 October, A.D. 651). The first lineage event is stated in couplet form and includes a phrase relating the first lineage event to the Palenque Triad of gods. The sentence ends with an undeciphered series of glyphs that might contain verbs and/or other deity names. The episode then continues with two Period Ending rites by his father, Pacal II (14 October, A.D. 652, and 7 August, A.D. 665).

The second episode begins with the death of Pacal II (31 August, A.D. 683), and then gives the accession of Chan Bahlum II (10 January, A.D. 684). (Chan Bahlum is the older brother of Kan Xul.) The episode ends with a brief reference to Kan Xul's accession, which occurred some twenty years later. The third and fourth episodes then expand on this sequence of events. The third episode restates the accession of Chan Bahlum II and ties it by a Distance Number to his death (20 February, A.D. 702). The fourth episode begins with the Period Ending 9.13.10.0.0 (26 January, A.D. 702) and ties this event to the death of Chan Bahlum II. Chan Bahlum II's death is restated as background information and tied to the accession of Kan Xul II (3 June, A.D. 702). Kan Xul II's accession is greatly elaborated and emphasized by the use of a special Introductory Glyph, a Supplementary Series, and verbal couplets. Kan Xul II's name phrase includes a multitude of titles.

Following the fourth episode, the time frame of the story backs up to the accession of Pacal II (29 July, A.D. 615), which predates both the Initial Series date of the main text and the dates of the caption text. In this final section of the main text, the story moves from the accession of Pacal II to the accession of Kan Xul II (A.D. 702) and finally to an undeciphered event (R13), categorized by Stuart as a dedication event (14 August, A.D. 720), which includes a "bundle-in-hand *na*" compound (Q14). This event is foregrounded by the use of the PEI and a Supplementary Series. It is the climax of the story. The episode ends with a "house" event conducted by Xoc twenty-three days later and a reference to Kan Xul II. As the story begins with the birth of Xoc (the caption text) and climaxes with an event by him, the protagonist of the story appears to be Xoc.

A problem in understanding the narrative on the Palace Tablet has been the dominant role that Kan Xul II plays in the main text. The descent line of succession passed from Pacal II to his son Chan Bahlum II and then to Chan Bahlum II's younger brother, Kan Xul II. Presumably, the descent line passed from brother to brother in this case because Chan Bahlum had no male heirs. Lounsbury first

suggested that Xoc was the ruler who followed Kan Xul II, and Schele (1978:53) speculated that Xoc was a third son of Pacal II. The implication is that Kan Xul II did not have any male heirs either.

However, D. Stuart (pers. comm., 1987) noted that the verb identified by Lounsbury and Schele as the "accession" of Xoc—that is, the undeciphered climax of the story—is related to the undeciphered verb in the concluding episode of the Tablet of the Slaves. Both of these verbs are followed by the "bundle-in-hand *na*" compound. He suggested that these verbs referred not to accession but to some "dedication event." He further suggested that Xoc's role was as a "subsidiary," similar to the role of Chac Zotz. It is likely that Kan Xul II plays a dominant role in this narrative because he is Xoc's ruler.

Because the Palace Tablet has been attributed to Kan Xul II, House AD, which contained this monument, as well as House D of the Palace have been attributed to him. However, the Palace Tablet is the monument of Xoc, and we must, therefore, reevaluate the function of these Palace buildings as well as the role of Kan Xul II at Palenque.

Oval Palace Tablet

The Oval Palace Tablet at Palenque (fig. 65) illustrates an actor sitting on a double-headed jaguar throne. He is flanked on the left by a female actor extending a "jester god" headdress. This is the same headdress used in the illustration of the first lineage event on the Palace Tablet and Tablet of the Slaves. I have demonstrated that the central actors on the Palace Tablet and Tablet of the Slaves, and the small actor on the Cross Group Tablets, are participating in their first lineage event. Given the similarity of the Oval Palace Tablet to these monuments, I suggest that the Oval Palace Tablet is another image of a first lineage event.

The caption text consists of two blocks of text. The left block frames the left actor and includes the name of Lady Zac Kuk. The right block adjacent to the right actor includes the name Pacal II. Although the caption text may have a verb at A1, it lacks a date of any kind. The wall area around the Oval Palace Tablet has the remains of a painted text, which may have added more information to this story. It is unfortunately lost. As noted in chapter 1, there is a pre-accession event for Pacal II on the Temple of the Inscriptions West Tablet, at E1–F7. This implied event occurred just six uinals before Pacal II's accession. I tentatively suggest this date of 9.9.1.16.8 2 Lamat 1 Uo (31 March, A.D. 615) for the event illustrated on the Oval Palace Tablet.

As noted, Lady Zac Kuk is stated to be the mother of Pacal II on



Figure 65. Oval Palace Tablet (drawing courtesy Merle Greene Robertson). Palenque Oval Tablet

the Temple of the Inscriptions. She was also the reigning ruler when this ritual occurred.

The Temple XVIII Jamb Text

Although the Temple XVIII Jambs do not have an image associated with them (or at least none has survived), the text on this monument does include a first lineage event that is relevant to this discussion.

The text begins with an Initial Series and records the birth of Chaacal III on 9.12.6.5.8 3 Lamat 6 Zac (16 September, A.D. 678). This birth is marked with the AEI to indicate that it is background

information. It is stated that Chaacal's father is Batz Chan. The second sentence begins with a Distance Number that leads from Chaacal III's birth to his foregrounded first lineage event at age fourteen on 9.13.0.7.0 5 Ahau 8 Ch'en (5 August, A.D. 692). This sentence also makes a reference to the Palenque Triad. The third sentence again begins with a Distance Number, which leads from the now backgrounded first lineage event to an event that occurred when Chaacal III was sixteen years old, on 9.13.2.9.0 11 Ahau 18 Yax (4 September, A.D. 694). This event is marked with a PEI to foreground it, but unfortunately it has been eroded.

The next sentence begins a new episode by backing up in time to Chaacal III's birth. It ties his backgrounded birth to his foregrounded accession on 9.14.10.4.2 9 Ik 5 Kayab (3 January, A.D. 722). The subject is deleted from this sentence but implied by context. The next sentence begins a new section by backing up in time over three thousand years before the initial date of the text. The event on this date is the mythological accession of Lady Beastie. A Distance Number ties her backgrounded accession to the accession of Chaacal III, which is implied by the Distance Number but not stated.

The structure of the last part of the text is not completely understood and must await better decipherment of its glyphs. However, it does contain two place-names: the *cab* cave of Chaacal and a *kut-te-wits* (quetzal-tree-mountain). The role Chaacal III played at Palenque is discussed in the appendix.

Summary of First Lineage Events

The short actor shown on the three Cross Group Tablets represents the six-year-old Chan Bahlum II on the occasion of his first lineage event. On these tablets Chan Bahlum II is illustrated three times performing a ritual that is associated with one particular member of the Palenque Triad of deities at the cave of the deities' birth. On the Palace Tablet and the Temple XVIII Jambs, the sentences that state Kan Xul II's and Chaacal III's first lineage events make a reference to this triad of deities. This suggests that the first lineage events of Kan Xul II and Chaacal III also involved this trio of rituals.

Chan Bahlum's GIII ritual, which is illustrated on the Tablet of the Sun, involves the holding of a flint shield (fig. 53). The illustration of Chac Zotz's and Xoc's first lineage events on the Tablet of the Slaves and Palace Tablet, respectively, also involves the flint shield (figs. 63, 56). On these two monuments, a specific sequence of actions is implied, as the viewer's eye is drawn from the left action (the giving of the headdress) across the central actor to the right action (the giving of the flint shield). On the Palace Tablet, the left actor is in the process of leaning forward to hand Xoc a headdress. The left actor leans forward extending the shield that will be received next by

Xoc. On the Tablet of the Slaves, the flanking actors are less animated than their counterparts on the Palace Tablet. They do not lean forward towards the central actor, but the left actor still extends his object to Chac Zotz. This exchange would be followed by the right actor handing him the shield. On the Tablet of the Sun, Chan Bahlum II stands alone, holding the shield he has presumably just received (fig. 53). The sequence of actions that is initiated on the Palace Tablet and Tablet of the Slaves appears complete on the Tablet of the Sun. On the Oval Palace Tablet, Pacal II receives the headdress, which both Chac Zotz and Xoc received on the occasion of their first lineage event. These scenes are different moments in the same ritual.

As noted above, in a comparison of the three illustrations of Chan Bahlum II's first lineage event, the GIII ritual on the Tablet of the Sun is the one that is highlighted. It is of great interest that this ritual was chosen to be illustrated on the Palace Tablet, Oval Palace Tablet, and Tablet of the Slaves as well.

On the Tablet of the Sun, Chan Bahlum II stands before a jaguar throne at the cave of GIII. Evidence that a jaguar throne existed at a cave is found in the accession statements on the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs. The accession phrase states that the ruler was "seated" on the jaguar throne (literally the jaguar mat) at the *zac tun na* 'the white stone of the house'. In the Palace Tablet's illustration of Xoc's first lineage event, Xoc sits on the same type of throne found at the cave of GIII as illustrated on the Tablet of the Sun. The association of this throne with GIII's cave suggests that the location of Xoc's first lineage event was also the cave of GIII. I suspect that the stela-like shape behind Xoc is the stalagmite of the cave.

Pacal II is illustrated on the Oval Palace Tablet sitting on a double-headed jaguar throne during his first lineage event (fig. 65). On Piedras Negras Stela 5, the ruler sits on a similar jaguar throne, which is located inside the jaws of a *cauac* monster/cave. An anthropomorphic form of the twisted-cord jaguar found on the Tablet of the Sun's central shield emerges from the eye of the *cauac* monster/cave (Maler 1901–3: pl. XV). This again suggests that the location of these first lineage events was a cave and specifically the cave of GIII.

In summary, the Cross Group story emphasizes the rituals of Chan Bahlum II's first lineage event, which occurred at the cave of GIII. This GIII ritual is the part of the first lineage event rituals that the artists chose to illustrate on the Palace Tablet, Tablet of the Slaves, and the Oval Palace Tablet.

Second Lineage Events

Two monuments, the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet and the Temple XIV Tablet, illustrate a second pre-accession event performed by Kan Xul

II and Chan Bahlum II, respectively. I will refer to this as a *second lineage event.*

Dumbarton Oaks Tablet

The Dumbarton Oaks Tablet was trimmed for easier removal by looters (Coe & Benson 1966). Both the right and left side are missing parts of the image (fig. 66). A central actor who is dressed in the costume of Chac stands in a dance pose. Flanking the central actor are two actors who sit with objects in their laps. Above the head of each flanking actor is a block of caption text. Like the caption text on the Tablet of the Slaves, this names the flanking actors (Schele 1978, 1988). They are the ruler Pacal II and his consort, Lady Ahpo Hel. Because the caption text identifies only the flanking actors, we must again look to the main text for a sentence that will explain who the central actor is, what event is taking place, and the date of the event.

The main text begins with a Distance Number, not a Calendar Round or Initial Series. This is a clear indication that this sentence was originally in the middle of a longer text. Consequently, at least the beginning of this story and more than likely its end as well are missing. However, there are some strong visual clues that the part of the main text that refers to the image remains intact.

The first sentence of the existing main text begins with a Period Ending event and a Distance Number, which together allow the first two Calendar Round dates in this sentence to be confidently placed at the Long Count positions of 9.11.0.0.0 12 Ahau 8 Ceh (14 October, A.D. 652) (A2–B2) and 9.11.4.7.0 6 Ahau 8 Cumku (10 February, A.D. 657) (A4–B4).

A series of activities is given for the event on the 6 Ahau 8 Cumku date. The first part of the event is a verb (A5) that tends to occur with dates that are on or near tropical anniversaries (Schele 1982:201). The subject of this anniversary event appears to be a variation of Chac's name. The second part of the event is the *u cab* cave phrase with Pacal II as subject, which indicates that the location of this event is a cave associated with Pacal II. The third part of the event contains a series of undeciphered verbs whose subject is Kan Xul II. One of these verbs, the "knot skull" sign (C5), carries the PEI to foreground it. Kan Xul II's name is elaborated with titles. Within this long sentence, the verb with Kan Xul II as subject is the most emphasized event (it is marked with the PEI).

The second sentence begins with a third Calendar Round date, 9 Manik 5 Muan (J1–K1). It is not introduced by a Distance Number, but the next possible Long Count position for this Calendar Round following the last date (6 Ahau 8 Cumku) is 9.11.18.7.7 (6 December, A.D. 670). The verb is undeciphered, and the subject appears to be a Chac variant.



Palenque D.O. Tablet

Figure 66. Dumbarton Oaks Tablet (drawing courtesy Linda Schele).

Schele (1982, 1988) and Dütting (1984) place the Long Count position of 9 Manik 5 Muan at 9.14.11.2.7, a full Calendar Round cycle later (fifty-two years). But there is no precedent for this arbitrary jumping of a full Calendar Round cycle. As noted in chapter 1, the convention of omitting Distance Numbers or Calendar Rounds from a sentence does not create confusion in the Long Count position: the context of the preceding dates establishes the time frame, which remains in effect unless other information contravenes. If the Maya jumped Calendar Round cycles arbitrarily, then we cannot reliably date *anything* that is not directly tied to a Period Ending or Initial Series by a Distance Number. Therefore, using basic calendrical rules, this date, 9 Manik 5 Muan, must be given the Long Count position of 9.11.18.7.7.

On the three dates of the Dumbarton Oaks narrative, Kan Xul II was eight, twelve, and twenty-six years old, respectively. On all three of these dates, the flanking actors named in the caption text as Lady Ahpo Hel and Pacal were alive.[15]

The central actor does not interact directly with either flanking actor, but the motion to the left, the left tilt of the central actor's body, and his own gaze towards the upper left focus attention on the left side of the image. The sentence that frames the emphasized left side is the event that occurred on 6 Ahau 8 Cumku when Kan Xul II was twelve years old (fig. 64b). The name phrase of Kan Xul II in this sentence is directly above the central actor's head. The name phrases of the flanking actors are directly above their heads. This is a very strong visual clue that the central actor is Kan Xul II, and that this sentence explains the image.

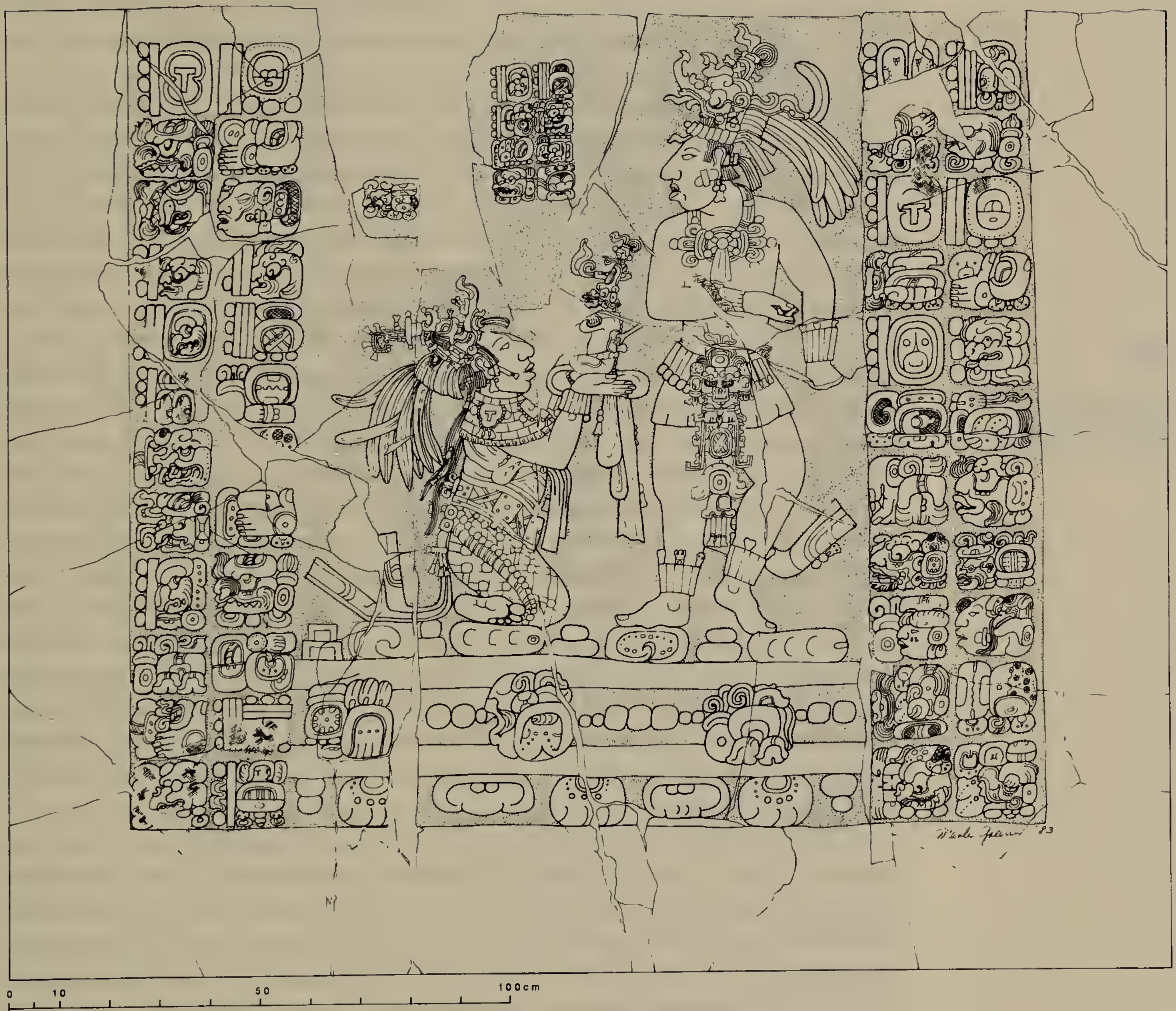
We can say, therefore, that the image on the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet illustrates Kan Xul II at the age of twelve performing a preaccession ritual. Although there is nothing in the image to indicate directly where this event occurred, the text states that it occurred at the *cab* cave of Pacal II. Pacal II was the reigning lord when this event took place. As noted, Kan Xul II is dressed as Chac, the rain god of the cave.

El Retiro is a site at the foot of Don Juan Mountain to the west of Palenque. It was visited by Blom and La Farge (1927) who noted that a temple at this site was said by locals to have contained a wall panel in the style of Palenque. Unfortunately the temple collapsed before Blom and La Farge could record this panel. The Dumbarton Oaks Tablet has been attributed to the Palenque school on stylistic and epigraphic grounds. However, the original location of the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet is known only to the looter. Given that Kan Xul did not take the throne until the age of fifty-seven and not until the death of his older brother, Alfonso Morales (pers. comm. 1986)

has suggested that the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet is the El Retiro panel. It is quite likely that Kan Xul was centered at this location.

Temple XIV Tablet

Another monument that illustrates a pre-accession event is the Temple XIV Tablet (fig. 67). The shattered pieces of this tablet were located in the debris of Temple XIV beside the Temple of the Sun at Palenque. The tablet has been restored and replaced in its original location on the inner back wall of the temple. The edges of the monument are clearly marked, and it is complete with the exception of a few lost fragments.



Palenque Temple 14 Tablet

Figure 67. Temple XIV Tablet (drawing courtesy Merle Greene Robertson).

See: P - Academia: Xibalba, page 17 - 21, 25
P - Academia: Maya War, page 5
P - Wayeb: Wayeb_notes0030, pp 1 - 19
Papers Classic: 2006 XXX Palenque Myth, page 16
Maya Calendar: 3114 BC - 4772 AD, page 3
Maya Iconography: Deity Relationship, page 12
Maya Language: Glyph T 911, page 1
Naranjo: Regal Rabbit Vase, pp 15 - 23
2012 Notes: Boln Yokte - Grofe IMS, pp 1 - 7

The composition of the tablet is similar to the Cross Group Tablets in that the main text is divided into two blocks of text that flank the image. The image illustrates a dancing actor on the right and a kneeling female actor on the left. They appear before a layered base with water symbols on it. This water is reminiscent of the water found in the cave on Vessel 120, which suggests that they are standing at the edge of a pool of water in a cave.

Rituals conducted beside pools of water are well documented in the scholarly literature and by archaeological remains. Fuentes y Guzman (J. E. S. Thompson 1975) described a cave near Mixco Viejo, Guatemala, that had a motif of coiled serpents at its mouth. Legend has it that inside the cave the Maya sacrificed children to the cave deity who took the form of a small stream. La Farge (1947) noted a modern cave ritual in which a little gourd of blood was placed beside a pool of water in the cave of Yalan Na'.

Like the Tablet of the Sun and the Tablet of the Foliated Cross, the image on the Temple XIV Tablet contains a caption text that includes events that will be repeated in the main text. The caption text gives the date 13 Oc 18 Uo (F1–G1). The verb of the 13 Oc 18 Uo event is undeciphered, but the name phrase of the subject includes titles that are used by Chan Bahlum II on the Cross Group Tablets as well as a "GII (God K)" glyph. Following the subject is the *u cab* phrase with a deity as subject, and a toponym (G4) referring to a "north serpent." Just as in previous examples, the reading of the caption text brings the viewer to the action of the image. The *u cab* phrase and "north serpent" toponym indicate that the location of the event is a cave, and this is consistent with the symbols in the image.

The caption text above the female actor is missing the upper portion (E). The first of the remaining glyphs resembles one that represents the relationship between a mother and her son on Bonampak Stela 1 (Mathews 1980). It is followed by a title used by Chan Bahlum II. This caption text appears to name the kneeling actor as the mother of Chan Bahlum II. She has been identified as such by several scholars using different criteria (Schele 1982, 1988; Dütting 1984; Schele & M. Miller 1986). I believe this identification to be correct. In the Cross Group narrative, Chan Bahlum II's mother is stated to be Lady Ahpo Hel.

The 13 Oc 18 Uo Calendar Round of the caption text occurred twice during Chan Bahlum II's lifetime—once when he was thirteen years old on 9.10.15.7.10 (8 April, A.D. 648) and again when he was sixty-five years old on 9.13.8.2.10 (27 March, A.D. 700), just two years before his death. However, the only Long Count position for 13 Oc 18 Uo that occurred when both Chan Bahlum II and Lady Ahpo Hel were alive was 9.10.15.7.10. Therefore, a Long Count position of 9.10.15.7.10 for the 13 Oc 18 Uo date of the caption text

seems secure. As noted in the introduction, when a date is given only a Calendar Round notation, a historical time frame is assumed unless other information contravenes.[16]

The main text begins at A1–B1 with the date 9 Ik 10 Mol. The first verb of the 9 Ik 10 Mol sentence is a "*chan*/serpent-in-hand" verb and a "God K" glyph (B2). This is followed by what appears to be a variant of the *u cab* (A3), and by a nominal phrase that appears to name the moon goddess and two other deities. The next sentence in the main text begins with the Calendar Round 13 Oc 18 Uo (A5–A9) and is virtually identical in its construction to the 13 Oc 18 Uo sentence of the caption text, with the exception of three glyphs. This repetition of events follows the convention on the Tablet of the Sun and the Tablet of the Foliated Cross, where an event of the main text forms a couplet with the caption text and action in the image.

The Long Count position for 13 Oc 18 Uo was established by the caption text. Hence, the Long Count position for the initial date is the first occurrence of this Calendar Round before 13 Oc 18 Uo. This is 9.10.3.10.2 9 Ik 10 Mol (1 August, A.D. 636). The structure of the Temple XIV Tablet is similar to that of the Tablet of the Slaves in that both begin without the use of an Initial Series and in historical rather than mythological time.

The next sentence begins at B9 with a backgrounded verb and a place-name that refers to the location of the 13 Oc 18 Uo event (A10). This toponym glyph appears in the image under Chan Bahlum II's feet.[17] A foregrounded event follows at B10–A11. The Calendar Round date and Distance Number for this event have been deleted. The B10–A11 event appears to refer to the final event of the main text, which Schele (1982, 1988) has paraphrased as the "anniversary" of the "first God K-in-hand."

The narrative then begins a new section with an enormous Distance Number, 5.18.4.7.8.13.18 (932,174 years), that backs up the story into mythological time. The Calendar Round date for this mythological event is 9 Ik 10 Mol. Although this Calendar Round date is the same as the initial date of the main text, the Distance Number makes it completely clear that these two dates do not have the same Long Count position. The mythological event (C4–D4) has been paraphrased by Schele (1982, 1988) as "the first holding of the God K manikin scepter." The mythological event is tied to the final event of the narrative, which occurred on 9 Ahau 3 Kankin (C5–B5). The mythological event is stated as background information to the 9 Ahau 3 Kankin event. The verbs stated in the event on 9 Ahau 3 Kankin are undeciphered, but Chan Bahlum II appears to be the subject. The only Long Count position for 9 Ahau 3 Kankin that occurred during Chan Bahlum II's lifetime was 9.11.1.2.0 (18 November, A.D. 653). Understanding the specific act Chan Bahlum II

carried out on this date must await further decipherment of the verbs of this text.

In summary, the first section of the main text presents the historical story. The second section changes the time anchor from the initial date of the story to a mythological anchor in the distant past. This is the same structure used for the time frame on the Temple XVIII Tablet, which changes to a mythological anchor in the second section and ties an ancient event to the conclusion of the story.[18]

The verbs of the Temple XIV Tablet's main text support the interpretation that the 13 Oc 18 Uo event is the illustrated event. At Yaxchilan, when an actor is illustrated holding a God K manikin scepter, the verb used in the text is a construction of the form auxiliary verb + *ti* + verbal noun that uses an "*ahau*-in-hand" sign as a verbal noun (Josserand, Schele & Hopkins 1985). The *ahau* 'lord' refers to the manikin scepter but does not specify that this *ahau* is a God K. However, in these examples it is not necessary to specify, because the image supplies the information about what *ahau* is being held.

On the Temple XIV Tablet, there are four verbs in the main text that use an outstretched hand that is about to grasp something (A11, B2, D4, B8) (fig. 68). At D4, the hand holds a T533 *ahau* glyph, which is followed by a T1030d "God K mirror" sign. In reference to the D4 "*ahau*-in-hand" sign, Schele states, "The God K mirror in the second half of the verbal glyph functions as a semantic determinative to insure that the identification of the scepter as God K is understood" (Schele 1982:305). In other words, the God K mirror is indicating what kind of *ahau* is being held.

At B2, the hand holds the T114 *chan* 'serpent' followed by the T1030d "God K mirror" sign. In the image, rulers are often illustrated holding a serpent with a God K head emerging from its mouth or a serpent conflated with a God K. The "*chan*/serpent-in-hand" verb refers to the holding of the double-headed serpent, and the God K that follows is indicating that it is a God K serpent. At A11, the hand holds the T1030d torch mirror of God K, which indicates that the action of this verb is the holding of a God K.

At B8—which is the event I have proposed is illustrated in the image—the "*ahau*-in-hand" verb is not followed by a "God K mirror" sign. This is the only verb in this text that does not specify what kind of *ahau* is being held. The reason is very simply that this verb does not require one: the image provides that information. In the image, Chan Bahlum II is illustrated receiving a God K manikin scepter.

The main text on the Temple XIV Tablet tells a story about events that occurred early in the life of Chan Bahlum II. The image and caption text elaborate and emphasize an event from that story.

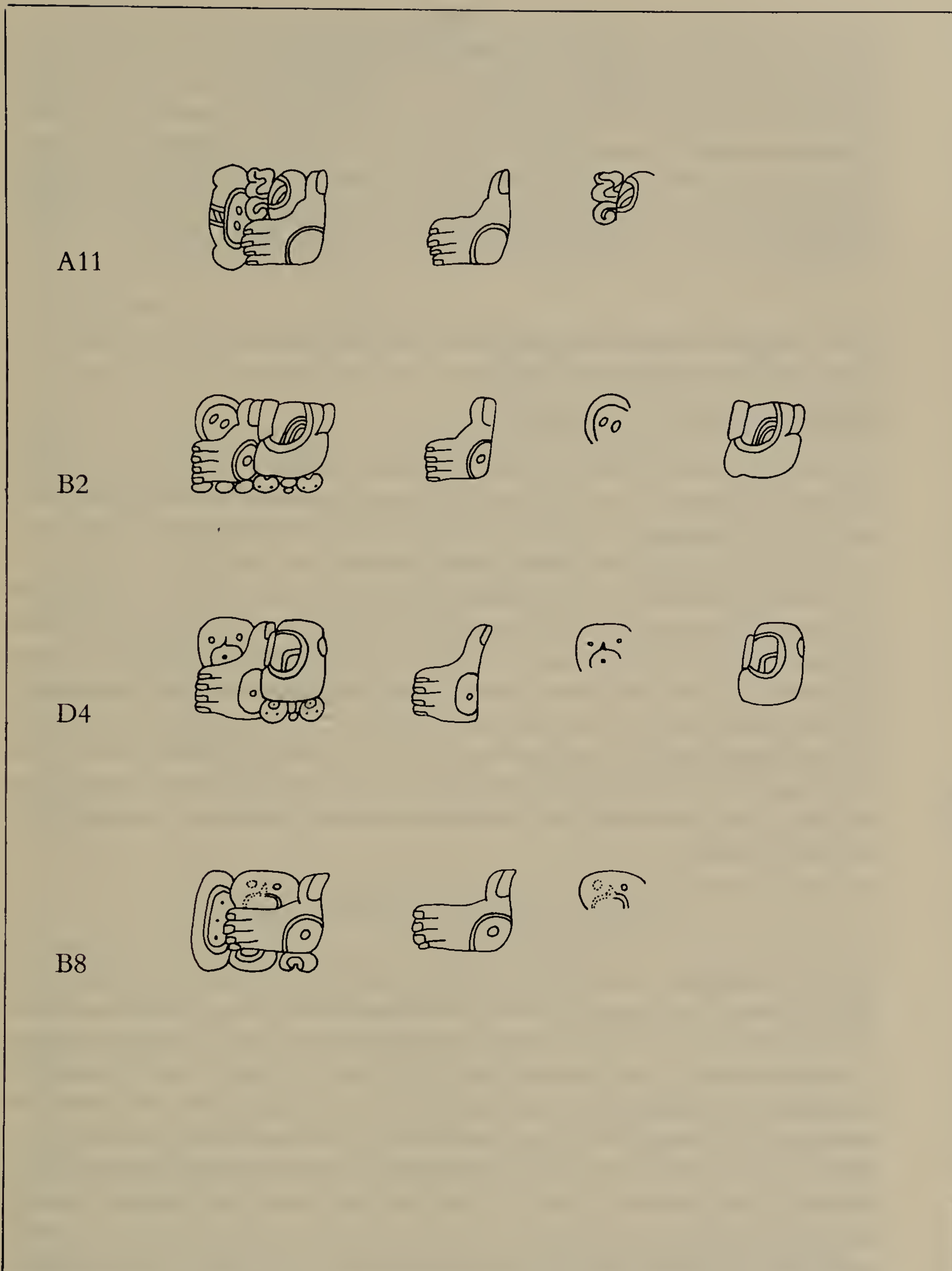


Figure 68. Verbs from the Temple XIV Tablet.

Palenque Temple 14 Tablet

Table 4
Pre-accession Events by Age

Event	Chan Bahlum II	Kan Xul II
First lineage event	age 6 (Cross Group)	age 7 (Palace Tablet)
Second lineage event	age 13 (Temple XIV)	age 12 (Dumbarton Oaks Tablet)
Third event	age 18 (Temple XIV)	age 26 (Dumbarton Oaks Tablet)
Accession	age 48 (Cross Group)	age 57 (Palace Tablet)

The symbols in the image indicate that the location of the event is a cave, and the text states this fact.

Summary of Second Lineage Events

As listed in table 4, the Temple XIV Tablet and the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet both record two sequential events that occurred after the subject's first lineage event but before his accession event. These are what I have called the second lineage event.

On the occasion of the second lineage event, both subjects are illustrated dancing at a cave location. Dances are recorded to have occurred during modern cave rituals. On the Temple Tablet, Chan Bahlum II's mother leans forward and hands him a God K scepter. On the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet, Kan Xul II's parents sit on either side of him, holding scepters in their laps. I suggest that later in this illustrated ceremony, Kan Xul II's mother would have handed her son the God K scepter, and his father would then have handed Kan Xul II his scepter.

Identities of the Flanking Actors

On the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet, Kan Xul II is flanked by the ruler Pacal II and his consort on the occasion of his second lineage event. Although the text does not state their relationship, we know from other narratives that they are Kan Xul II's parents. It is quite possible that this composition of a couple flanking a protagonist was intended to be an illustrated parentage statement. Evidence that parentage information is important in pre-accession stories is found on the Tablet of the Cross, where Chan Bahlum II is illustrated by himself on the occasion of his first lineage event but the text states that his parents were Pacal II and Lady Ahpo Hel. On the Oval Palace Tablet, Pacal II is flanked by Lady Zac Kuk on the occasion of his first lineage event. Again there is no parentage statement, but she is named as his mother in other stories. It is interesting that Pacal II's father does not appear in this scene. This brings up the central question of what role the flanking actors play in these rituals.

Does Pacal II participate in the second lineage event of Kan Xul II because he was Kan Xul II's father or because he was the ruler in power when this event occurred? In the same regard, does Lady Zac Kuk participate in Pacal II's first lineage event because she was his mother or because she was the ruler in power when this event occurred? Lady Zac Kuk proffers, not the object presented by the females in the other two illustrations of the first lineage event, but rather the object offered by the males in those illustrations. This could be taken as an indication that her importance lies in her identity as ruler rather than as mother.

The answer to this question is critical. If Pacal II and Lady Zac Kuk appear in these rituals because they were the reigning rulers, then the flanking actor on the Palace Tablet and Tablet of the Slaves might be not the father of the protagonist but rather the ruler in power when the event occurred.

There are no ethnohistorical accounts of first and second lineage events that could give us some insight into these identities. However, in modern highland ceremonies, rituals that are specifically carried out for individuals are usually conducted by the patrilineal head of the lineage (B. Tedlock 1982). In Classic times, this position was not necessarily held by the ruler; thus, a third possible choice for the identification of the flanking male is the patrilineal head of the protagonist's lineage.

On the Palace Tablet, there is no caption text that identifies the flanking male. On the Tablet of the Slaves, the left caption text names the flanking male. This name phrase is composed of three glyphs. The first is unique; it does not appear in any other contexts at Palenque. This glyph could be either a title or a personal name. The last two are not deciphered, but they appear as titles in the name phrases of certain Palenque rulers including Chaacal III, as well as in those of Pacal II's wife and the flanking female. Until these glyphs are deciphered, this caption text cannot be used to identify the relationship between Chac Zotz and the flanking male.

Evidence that the flanking actor is the protagonist's ruler is found in the relationship that Chac Zotz and Xoc had with their respective rulers. As noted, both Chac Zotz and Xoc were secondary lords who participated in their first lineage events late in life. Chac Zotz was fifty-two years old and Xoc was fifty-seven. No parentage statement occurs for either, but the current ruler is emphasized in both narratives. In these scenes, the identity of Chac Zotz and Xoc appears to rest more on their relationship with the ruler than their genealogical background.

External evidence that the flanking male may be the ruler and not the father may be found in a comparison with a ritual shown on Piedras Negras Lintel 2. In this scene, the ruler presides over a cere-

mony involving six kneeling youths who wear headdresses similar to the headdress of the first lineage event (D. Stuart, pers. comm. 1986). Hence, the ruler is shown to have conducted rituals for individuals who were not his sons. However, with only circumstantial evidence, we are left in the position of not being able to determine clearly what role these flanking males played.

This brings us to the identity of the flanking female and her role. Our choices are that she was the mother of the protagonist, wife of the ruler, or wife of the head of the lineage.

Evidence that a wife could assist her husband in the performance of ceremonies is found in the modern rituals of the highlands. The shaman's wife performs certain duties in the rituals conducted by her husband (Diego Ignacio Nix and his wife Juana Ventura V., Daykeeper of Chichicastenango, pers. comm. 1988). I would caution here that the identity of the female is not necessarily tied to that of the flanking male.

On the Tablet of the Slaves, the caption text that names the flanking female is composed of three glyphs, two of which are the same titles found in the name phrase of the flanking male as well as in the name phrases of Chaacal III and Lady Ahpo Hel. Again the first glyph appears to be either a title or personal name, and again it is impossible to determine which. On the Palace Tablet, the flanking female is not named. She wears in her hair a sign used in the name phrase of Lady Ahpo Hel. However, it cannot be demonstrated that this title is exclusive to the wives of rulers, so this sign cannot be used to identify this woman as such. Hence, neither of these two monuments gives any solid clues to the role of the flanking females.

On the Temple XIV Tablet, which illustrates the second lineage event of Chan Bahlum II, the flanking female appears to be identified as his mother. This suggests that her role as mother is central to the event. However, we cannot extrapolate this information to the Tablet of the Slaves and Palace Tablet, for these monuments do not illustrate second lineage events for future rulers but rather first lineage events for secondary lords. We are again left without conclusive evidence to demonstrate what role the flanking female had.

Although Schele's identification of these flanking actors as parents is a very reasonable suggestion, I believe the question of what role the flanking actors played in these narratives must remain open.

Relationship Between the Lineage Events and the Accession

Chronologically, a series of three events (first lineage event, Period Ending event, and second lineage event) occurred for both Chan Bahlum II and Kan Xul II before their accession (table 5). I have omitted from this discussion the final event on both the Temple XIV

Pre-accession Events Palenque + Yaxchilan

Table 5
Pre-accession Events by Date

	Date		
	Chan Bahlum II	Kan Xul II	Bird Jaguar IV
First lineage event	9.10.8.9.3 17 June, A.D. 641 (Tablet of the Sun)	9.10.18.17.19 19 October, A.D. 651 (Palace Tablet)	9.15.9.17.16 26 June, A.D. 741 (Stela 11)
Period Ending event	9.10.10.0.0 6 December, A.D. 642 (Tablet of the Sun)	9.11.0.0.0 12 October, A.D. 652 (Palace Tablet)	9.15.15.0.0 4 June, A.D. 746 (Stela 11)
Second lineage event	9.10.15.7.10 8 April, A.D. 648 (Temple XIV Tablet)	9.11.4.7.0 10 February, A.D. 657 (Dumbarton Oaks Tablet)	9.15.19.1.1 4 June, A.D. 750 (Stela 11)
Accession	9.12.11.12.10 10 January, A.D. 684 (Tablet of the Cross)	9.13.10.6.8 3 June, A.D. 702 (Palace Tablet)	9.16.1.0.0 3 May, A.D. 752 (Stela 11)

Tablet and the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet because most of the reference to it on the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet was destroyed by the looters.

In the Cross Group Tablets and Palace Tablet narratives, first lineage events are associated with accession. There is no stated connection between the first and second lineage events or between the second lineage events and accession. The Temple XVIII Jambs, which might have demonstrated the connection between these events, are eroded where a second lineage event might have been recorded. However, Stela 11 at Yaxchilan presents a story that includes all three pre-accession events and ties them to an accession.

Yaxchilan Stela 11

Stela 11 is located on a terrace in front of Structure 40 (Maler 1901–3). Tate (1986) reports a small platform that protruded out over the staircase in front of Stela 11, which might have prevented a direct frontal approach to the monument. It is not known, however, whether this platform is contemporary with the erection of the stela or a later modification. Beginning the narrative either on the side or the front produces a coherent story. Hence, it is impossible to determine how the viewer was intended to approach the stela. I have arbitrarily chosen to begin with the front image.

The front image illustrates two actors in deep relief (fig. 69). Both actors hold what has been called a "torch staff," a "flap staff,"

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Figure 69. Yaxchilan Stela 11, front (drawing after Teobert Maler 1901–03).

Yaxchilan Stela 11 River Side

or a "wind sock" by various authors. As these staffs have *pop* 'mat' symbols inside their quatrefoil shapes, I will refer to them as the mat staffs. Each actor wears a circular shield on his wrist. The right shield is turned to the viewer and displays the face of the twisted-cord jaguar deity found on the shield on the Tablet of the Sun. The careful overlapping of the shield and mat staff places both actors on the same plane and in the same space. The left actor stands in a passive stance with his mat staff covering most of his lower body. The right actor stands with his shield raised and his mat staff held away from his body. He wears an elaborate backrack and occupies two-thirds of the space. Thus, it is the right actor who is emphasized.

Above the heads of the actors is a sky band of deity heads. The area above the sky band is badly damaged, but it appears to contain two cartouches, each with an actor holding a ceremonial bar. Although it is not apparent from my drawing, it seems that a deity sits between the two cartouches, much as in the composition found in Yaxchilan Stela 1 (fig. 6). This upper border marks the location of the action as inside a cave.

At the foot of the left actor, the block of caption text is in the same high relief as the actors. It begins the narrative with the Calendar Round date 12 Cib 19 Yaxkin (9.15.9.17.16, or 26 June, A.D. 741); an auxiliary verb + *ti* + verbal noun construction for the event; and Shield Jaguar I as the subject. The verbal noun at K2 appears to name the mat staff (Schele 1982; Josserand, Schele & Hopkins 1985). This suggests that the left actor is Shield Jaguar I and that the event illustrated is this mat staff event. The emphasized right actor is not named.

The narrative continues with the block of text at the top of the monument. It is carved in relief that is almost flush with the background surface of the image and is visually insignificant in comparison to the high relief of the other caption text and the actors. The time frame moves forward to the Period Ending 9.15.15.0.0 9 Ahau 18 Xul (4 June, A.D. 746). Although much of the sentence is eroded, it appears to refer to a *ts'ap te-tun* event. An undeciphered compound is then followed by the nominal phrase for Shield Jaguar I. Because Shield Jaguar I was dead on this date, I assume he is not the subject of this event.[19] The sentence ends with the *u cab* phrase with Bird Jaguar IV as subject. The undeciphered compound will determine Shield Jaguar I's role in this Period Ending event. The reading of this sentence leads the viewer across the monument, below the upper register, and then down the monument between the two actors. As the action of the image has already been identified as the 12 Cib 19 Yaxkin mat staff event, this text must have been placed in the background of the scene to provide additional information pertinent to the mat staff event.

The story continues with the main text at the bottom of the

monument. This text consists of one elaborate sentence that moves the time frame forward to the accession of Bird Jaguar. It contains an Initial Series date of 9.16.1.0.0 11 Ahau 8 Tzec (3 May, A.D. 752), a Supplementary Series, multiple titles that were used in the previous event, and Bird Jaguar's parentage statement. He is stated to be the son of Shield Jaguar I and Lady Ik Skull.

Despite the fact that the mat staff event does not name the principal actor in the image, by implication he appears to be Bird Jaguar. The mat staff event occurred when Bird Jaguar was thirty-two years old, but no other event is recorded at Yaxchilan for Bird Jaguar earlier than this event. It was the first noted event in his life—that is, his first lineage event.[20] Although Bird Jaguar is not the subject of the verb, he is nonetheless the emphasized actor in the image (fig. 69).

Generally speaking, Maya texts are read from left to right. In keeping with the movement to the right, the viewer would move from the front to the right side of the stela. The story continued here with another Initial Series date of 9.16.1.0.0 and a Supplementary Series (fig. 70). The conclusion of this sentence is found on the left side of the stela, which means that in order to finish reading the sentence the viewer had to pass the back of the stela.

The scene on the back of Stela 11 illustrates an actor dressed in the guise of Chac with three captives kneeling before him (fig. 71). He holds a God K manikin scepter in his left hand. The lower caption text, which frames this action, backs up the time frame of the story to the date 9.15.19.1.1 1 Imix 19 Xul (4 June, A.D. 750). A crack in the monument has destroyed the verb, but the subject is named as Bird Jaguar. The nominal phrase ends by saying that Bird Jaguar was a Chac-te. The reading of this text leads the viewer to the principal actor dressed as Chac and identifies him as Bird Jaguar. Therefore, this scene illustrates a second pre-accession event for Bird Jaguar.

On the occasion of Kan Xul's second lineage event, he danced in the disguise of Chac and was later handed a God K manikin scepter by his mother (Dumbarton Oaks Tablet). On the occasion of Chan Bahlum II's second lineage event, he danced and received a God K manikin scepter from his mother (Temple XIV Tablet). On the occasion of Bird Jaguar's second pre-accession event, he is dressed as Chac and he holds a God K manikin scepter.

In the upper register, two actors are each framed by a block of caption text that identifies them as Lady Ik Skull and Shield Jaguar I, the parents of Bird Jaguar. On 1 Imix 19 Xul, Shield Jaguar had been dead for about eight years, but his wife, Lady Ik Skull, was still alive.[21] Since there is no location imagery in this upper register and no interaction between Bird Jaguar and these two actors, I suggest that these portraits are simply illustrated parentage statements.





East Side West Side Yaxchilan Stela 11 Temple Side

Figure 70 (left). Yaxchilan Stela 11, sides (drawing after Ian Graham and Sylvanus Morley). Figure 71 (right). Yaxchilan Stela 11, back (drawing after Teobert Maler 1901–03).

The reader then moves to the left side of the stela, where the Initial Series date that was begun on the right side concludes. This text continues the Supplementary Series with an undeciphered three-glyph phrase, then an 819-day count series, and finally the "year" position for the Initial Series date 9.16.1.0.0.[22] The verb of the event is an accession phrase that names Bird Jaguar as subject. The accession statement (the stela sides) is broken into two blocks of text that frame the text and image of the second lineage event (the stela back).[23]

Unlike the Initial Series events at Palenque, which are marked with AEIs as background information, the Initial Series dates on Stela 11 are on the event line of the story. Chronologically, Stela 11 records a mat staff event (the first lineage event), a Period Ending event, a Chac/God K event (the second lineage event), and an accession (table 5). Although it is not the illustrated event, the repetition and elaboration of the accession imply that it is the most important event and obviously the climax of the story.[24]

Rituals of Bird Jaguar

Several aspects of Bird Jaguar's first lineage event parallel those at Palenque. Tate (1986) argued that the mat staff events at Yaxchilan are clustered on or near summer solstice dates. At Palenque, the first lineage events of Chan Bahlum II, Xoc, and Chac Zotz are also clustered near summer solstice dates. A second similarity is found in the costume of Bird Jaguar, who wears the twisted-cord jaguar shield from the central icon on the Tablet of the Sun. As noted above, the GIII ritual illustrated on the Tablet of the Sun is the emphasized ritual of the first lineage event.

Both Kan Xul II's and Chan Bahlum II's first lineage events are tied directly to Period Ending events; this suggests that the relationship between these events is causal. On Stela 11, the Period Ending event by Bird Jaguar is associated with his first lineage event by its appearance in the background of the illustration of his first lineage event.

On the Tablet of the Sun, Chan Bahlum II's first lineage event is tied to an event that occurred five days later. This suggests that the ceremony involving the first lineage event continued for five days, or that a consequence of the first lineage event occurred five days later. At Yaxchilan, there are a number of monuments that record the date 4 Imix 4 Mol, which occurred just five days after the first lineage event of Bird Jaguar. On Lintel 39, Bird Jaguar is illustrated performing a "fish-in-hand/serpent" event at a cave. On Lintel 14, his wife Lady Great Skull and a cahal are illustrated performing a "fish-in-hand/serpent" event at a cave. On the new stela from Structure 21, his mother Lady Ik Skull is illustrated at a cave performing rituals.

Although not mentioned in the story on Stela 11, the proximity of this date to Bird Jaguar's first lineage event is surely not coincidental. I suggest that the 4 Imix 4 Mol rituals were either a continuation of Bird Jaguar's first lineage event ritual or a consequence of it.

Conclusion

The story told on Yaxchilan Stela 11 draws together the first and second lineage events, which are documented at Palenque in separate stories. The importance of these rituals in relation to accession is demonstrated by the fact that the Stela 11 narrative relates them in the same story as the accession. The variation in the different presentations of the first lineage event demonstrates that these rituals were not identical; this holds true for the second lineage event as well. However, a summary of the features of these events reveals a common structure. While the details of the ritual might vary, the appearance of these events in similar story lines implies that their purpose is the same.

Lounsbury's initial observation that first lineage events appear to be some kind of preparation for further office appears to be correct. However, that they specify what future office is questionable, given the fact that Chac Zotz became cahal and Xoc was probably also a lesser lord. It is possible that the second lineage event is specific to rulers.



Epilogue

Both the text and the image on Late Classic sculpture have the same function: to present information about a particular occasion. However, the artist often gave not just the facts, but rather a visually stimulating, epic production. There is great variation in the composition and layout of these stories, but the underlying organizing principle appears to be the placement of the blocks of text. I believe that the relationship between the text and the image comes down to a basic storytelling convention: we are told, and we are shown.

I have analyzed the Classic monuments in this study by reading them as though I were actually standing in front of them, and by treating the hieroglyphic text as a continuous story line. The placement of the text on the different surfaces of the monument and the continuation of the story line on other monuments forces the viewer to become an active participant and, in some cases, to symbolically retrace the route of a ritual circuit.

I believe I have presented sufficient evidence from epigraphic, iconographic, ethnographic, linguistic, and archaeological sources to establish that the Classic Maya conducted cave rituals and that many of the stories found on Late Classic monuments are the public commemoration of those private or semiprivate cave rituals.

Some general information about these Classic cave rituals can be inferred from the scenes that illustrate these events. On the occasion of the Period Ending event, the lord and his assistants made a ritual circuit around their community, stopping at four sacred caves. At one or more of these caves, the lord set up a tree-cross and stalagmite. A *lac* 'plate' for incense was placed before them, as well as bundles of cloth. The bundles contained ritual paraphernalia, such as codices, scepters, perforators, and sacrificial cords. The ritual paraphernalia might have been wrapped in cloth bundles to be transported to the cave, or the items might have been stored in the cave in these bundles. At some point during this ceremony, the lord sat on a throne.

The lord also "gave birth to" or evoked the deities of the cave. This is illustrated as the lord holding the serpent/sky ceremonial bar with the deities emerging from its ends. The commonest deities were God K and the Paddlers. It is likely that the ceremonial bar was a real object. The smoke emanating from the ends could have resulted from burning material, such as incense, pine pitch, or tobacco.

The lord performed an autosacrifice in the form of penis perforation, while other lords played a subsidiary role. The blood was dropped or scattered into a basket along with incense. In many Period Ending scenes, a sacrificial victim is sprawled at the feet of the lord, suggesting that the lord dispatched him shortly after the autosacrifice. Sometime during the ritual circuit, the ruler changed costume, in response to his change of location (a new cave), in order to carry out some specific act, or possibly because he had undergone some transformation.

Landa indicated that in the days preceding a Postclassic ceremony of any kind, the priest and his assistants began a regime of fasting, prayers, and sexual abstinence to prepare them for their roles. Landa stated that the route to the sacred location was cleaned and adorned, and that the ritual space was always purified before a ceremony. It is easy to imagine all of these preparations occurring before a Classic period cave ritual.

In his discussion of the Postclassic ceremonies in the month Uo, Landa noted that the priest spread out his books on fresh boughs and with prayers and devotions evoked Kinich Ahau Itzamna. He also burned incense and made prognostications for the year. Prognosticating for the new katun was an important function recorded in the *Books of Chilam Balam*. Prognostication in association with calendar ceremonies was documented at Santa Eulalia: the shaman went to the sacred cave during the Year Bearer ceremony and prognosticated for the New Year. It seems likely that, in addition to the ceremonies ending the past katun, the Classic lord might also have spread out his codex in the cave and prognosticated for the new katun.

The Period Ending event was not the exclusive domain of the ruler, for young lords and cahals are recorded to have conducted these rituals as well.

The Classic period scenes illustrate that the ritual circuit of the first lineage event involved visits to caves associated with specific deities (GI, GIII, and GII). At these caves, the young lord performed an autosacrifice and received ceremonial objects, including flint shields, headdresses, and mat staffs. These first lineage events were carried out in front of a tree-cross, throne, and deified maize plant, or while the young lord was seated on a throne. The second lineage event of the cave involved a dance during which the lord dressed in the costume of Chac. He brandished an axe, much like the Chac on Vase 4 and Vessel 120. The submission of captives and presumably their sacrifice also occurred. The lord was handed a God K manikin scepter. During the accession event, the lord held a God K or jester god scepter as he stood before the tree-cross, deified maize plant, and throne. He also evoked the deities of the cave. Again, the lord changed costume sometime during his ritual circuit.

The texts of Tikal specify that on the occasion of the accession the lord was seated as Chac-te. At Palenque and Yaxchilan, young lords are illustrated imitating Chac, which again suggests that this role was not exclusive to the ruler.

The first and second lineage events of the Classic period appear to have been some form of ritual preparation for office. The accession event was the transfer of power to the new successor. The Period Ending event represented the ending of one period of time and the successful beginning of another. For the Maya, the cave acted as a passage of transition between the real and invisible world. As such, the cave made an ideal setting for these rites of passage.

Although a review of cave-related themes from other time periods is beyond the scope of this book, I would like to point out that not only are cave rituals documented on the earliest Classic monuments, but Preclassic images such as the Loltun figure are actually located beside caves. The archaeological record suggest that caves as sites of ritual activity were important as far back as the Preclassic. This implies to me that the concepts associated with the cave were at the very root of Maya culture.

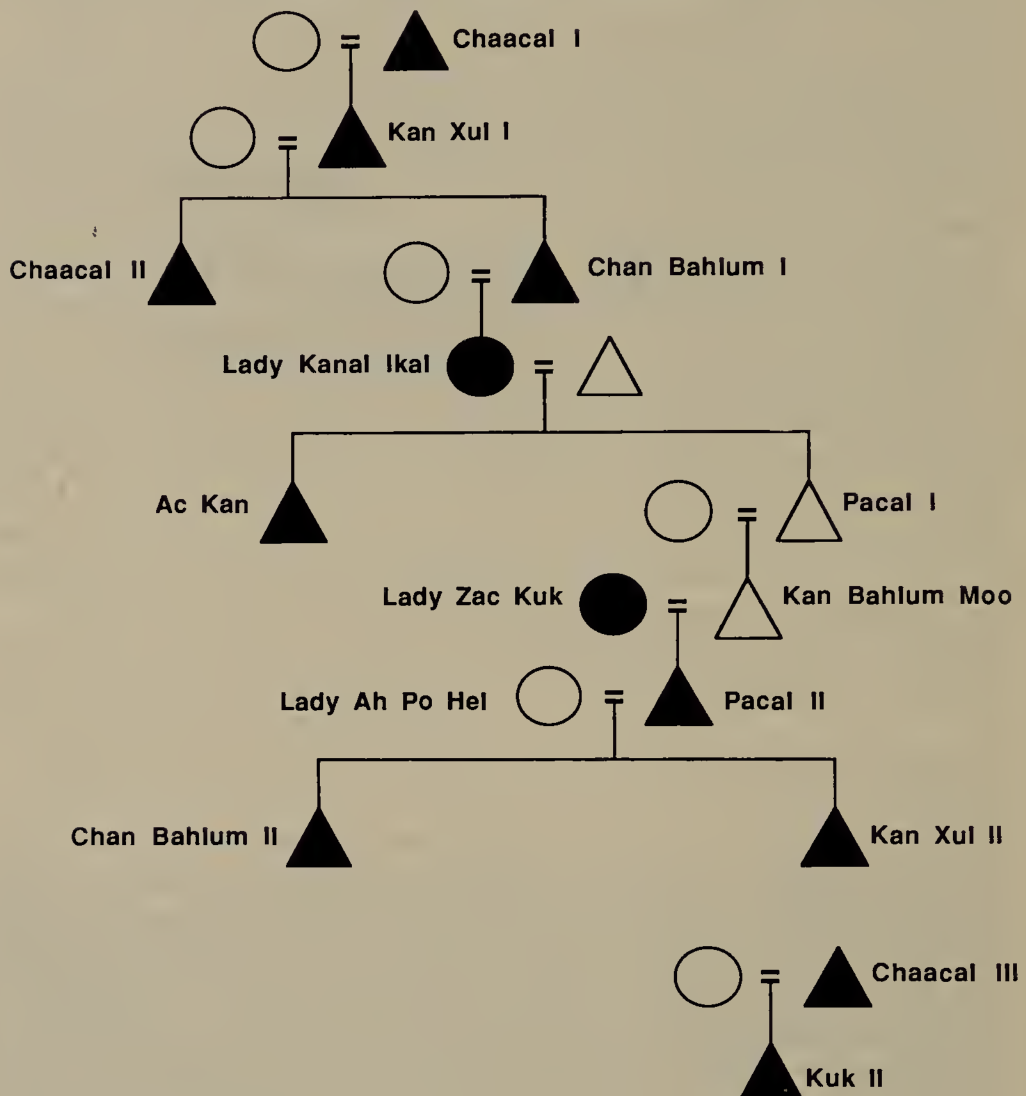
Appendix
The Genealogy of the Palenque Rulers

The hieroglyphic texts from Palenque provide information on the births, accessions, deaths, and genealogies of elite members of Palencano society of the Classic period. However, because these narratives focus on different things, complete information is not available for all individuals. From these partial records, a genealogy chart has been established (Schele 1983) (table 6). Because of the revision in Lady Kanal Ikal's death date and because of the reinterpretation of the Palace Tablet presented in chapter 7, this chart requires modification. I will begin with a revision concerning the Early Classic rulers, Lady Kanal Ikal and Ac Kan, and I will then discuss the Late Classic rulers, Chaacal III and his son, Kuk II.

The Early Classic Rulers

The hieroglyphic texts that commemorate the lives of Pacal II and his son, Chan Bahlum II, also include information concerning a series of earlier Palenque rulers. It appears that these early rulers did not erect monuments, or at least not monuments of a permanent nature. Therefore, the existence of these rulers is known only from later narratives.[1] Data given in the story on the Temple of the Inscriptions

Table 6
Genealogy of the Rulers of Palenque as Proposed by Linda Schele



Graphic by C. Kincaid

Tablets, Sarcophagus Lid, and Cross Group Tablets, has provided some birth, accession, and death dates for these early rulers but no parentage statements (Lounsbury 1974; Schele 1983, Robertson 1983). The only parentage statements in these narratives state that Chan Bahlum II was the son of Pacal II, and that Pacal II was the son of Kan Bahlum Mo and Lady Zac Kuk.

The narrative on the Temple of the Inscriptions Tablets presents the accession and Period Ending events for some of the rulers in the Palenque succession. Two of these rulers, Lady Kanal Ikal and Lady Zac Kuk, were women. The Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus narrative gives the death dates for all of these rulers, but most impor-

tant it introduces two new male subjects, Pacal I and Kan Bahlum Mo, who were not rulers. Lounsbury (1974) speculated that these two additional males were nevertheless ancestors of Pacal II. From Pacal II's parentage statement, he identified Kan Bahlum Mo as the father of Pacal II and by extension as the consort of Lady Zac Kuk.[2] Schele (1983:122) constructed a genealogical chart for these early subjects, in which Pacal I was the younger son of the ruler Lady Kanal Ikal (table 6). She speculated that Pacal I died before he had the opportunity to take the throne, but that the throne was passed to his daughter, Lady Zac Kuk. However, the reinterpretation of the death date of Lady Kanal Ikal discussed in chapter 1 implies that Pacal I was the consort of Lady Kanal Ikal. Thus, the two additional males in the sarcophagus narrative were both consorts of female rulers. I will argue that the ruler Ac Kan, who has been interpreted to be the son of Lady Kanal Ikal, was in fact her grandson. The evidence for these positions is as follows.

Hopkins (in press) has convincingly demonstrated that Maya rulership was determined through a patrilineal descent system. In a patrilineal descent system for succession to office, the descent line passes through a female only when no suitable male is available. Hence, in the British monarchy, which also practices a patrilineal descent system, Elizabeth II succeeded her father, George V, only because he had no sons. However, within this structure she is under pressure to transfer the throne to her eldest son Charles (even despite the successes of the women's liberation movement).

Assuming a patrilineal descent system, Lady Kanal Ikal acceded to the throne in A.D. 583 after her father's death because Chan Bahlum I had no direct male heirs. However, by A.D. 605, a suitable male in the form of Ac Kan "became available," and Lady Kanal Ikal abdicated. Seven years after his accession, Ac Kan died, presumably without an heir. However, Lady Kanal Ikal, who was still alive at this time, did not regain the throne. The next ruler was another woman, Lady Zac Kuk. Three short years after Lady Zac Kuk's accession, she abdicated in favor of her twelve-year-old son, Pacal II. Hence, both female rulers were replaced by males long before their own deaths.

The obvious question to ask in this descent line is why did the rule not pass directly to the male heir? In the case of Pacal II, we know that he was nine years old at the untimely death of Ac Kan. A plausible answer might be that he was not yet ritually prepared to take the throne. Furthermore, Ac Kan died the year before the major Period Ending on 9.9.0.0.0 (12 May, A.D. 613). Lady Zac Kuk is recorded both on the Temple of the Inscriptions Tablets and Sarcophagus text as performing this important Period Ending ritual. I speculate that the young Pacal II might not have been ritually prepared to carry out this function either.

Although there is no recorded birth date for Ac Kan, we can further speculate that at the time of Chan Bahlum I's death, he was either not yet of suitable preparation to take the throne or not yet born. Given that Lady Kanal Ikal ruled for over twenty years before abdicating, it seems most likely that Ac Kan was not yet born when Chan Bahlum I died.

There could have been numerous other reasons why these two young heirs did not immediately take the throne, but let us continue the discussion assuming that Ac Kan was not yet born and that Pacal II was not suitably prepared. This scenario places Ac Kan's birth somewhere after the death of Chan Bahlum II in A.D. 583 and the subsequent accession of Lady Kanal Ikal. If we assume that, like Pacal II, he came to the throne at the early age of twelve years, his birth would have been in about A.D. 593.

If Pacal I was the younger brother of Ac Kan, as suggested by Schele, then Pacal I would have been born some time after the post–583 birth of Ac Kan. However, even assuming the earliest date for Ac Kan's birth at A.D. 583, that would give, at maximum, twenty years for Pacal I to be born (post–583), to father a daughter (Lady Zac Kuk, birthdate unknown), and to have that daughter produce a grandchild (Pacal II, born in 603). This is a highly unlikely, if not impossible, time frame. This means that Pacal I had to be a generation older than Ac Kan, which places Pacal I in the same generation as the ruler Lady Kanal Ikal.

Schele (n.d.) noted that not all of the rulers mentioned in the main text were portrayed in the image on the sarcophagus. She correctly proposed that the image illustrated the direct ancestors of Pacal II. In this image, there are two female rulers (Lady Kanal Ikal and Lady Zac Kuk) and two nonruler males (Pacal I and Kan Bahlum Mo). Given that Kan Bahlum Mo is the consort of Lady Zac Kuk, this suggests that the other nonruler male, Pacal I, is a consort as well. Given the revised death date of Lady Kanal Ikal, the only role available for Pacal I within this narrative is as the consort of Lady Kanal Ikal.

The next change in the Palenque genealogy concerns the ruler Ac Kan to whom Lady Kanal Ikal abdicated. In table 6, Ac Kan is interpreted to be the son of Lady Kanal Ikal. However, information from Pacal II's sarcophagus narrative suggests that Ac Kan was the child of Lady Zac Kuk and Kan Bahlum Mo (table 3). In other words, he was the older brother of Pacal II.

The sarcophagus narrative, which runs along the edge of the lid, begins a new episode each time the reader turns a corner. On the east side of the sarcophagus, the first episode of the story gives the death dates for Chaacal I, Kan Xul I, Chaacal II, Chan Bahlum I, and Lady Kanal Ikal. The image below this text illustrates Chaacal I, Chan

Bahlum I, and Lady Kanal Ikal. Thus the text and image appear to be directly related. The fourth episode and climax of the narrative begins in the last glyph blocks on the west side and concludes on the north side. It states the birth and death of the protagonist Pacal II and names his parents as Lady Zac Kuk and Kan Bahlum Mo. Below this episode on the north side is an illustration of Lady Zac Kuk and Kan Bahlum Mo. In other words the image is illustrating the parentage statement. Again the text and image appear to be directly related.

On the north side, the second episode gives the death date for Ac Kan. Below this episode Lady Zac Kuk and Kan Bahlum Mo are again illustrated together. Given that all the other images at Palenque have a direct relationship with the text, it seems reasonable to expect this image to be related to the text as well. If Ac Kan was the uncle of Pacal II, as in table 6, then we have an odd alignment that groups together Pacal I's uncle, mother, and father. However, if Ac Kan was Pacal II's older brother, then this episode groups Ac Kan with his parents. It acts as an illustrated parentage statement just as the south side does for Pacal II.

If Ac Kan was the older brother of Pacal II, then the descent line of succession would have been as follows. When Chan Bahlum I died, the rule passed to his daughter Lady Kanal Ikal, presumably because Chan Bahlum I had no male heirs. Lady Kanal Ikal had already given birth to Lady Zac Kuk but apparently not to a male heir. Lady Kanal Ikal ruled for some twenty-odd years, during which time her daughter gave birth to two sons, Ac Kan and Pacal II. When Ac Kan became of suitable age, Lady Kanal Ikal abdicated in favor of her grandson. A brief seven years later, the young Ac Kan died, presumably without male heirs. However, he had a nine-year-old brother. The rule passed temporarily to their mother Lady Zac Kuk, who shortly thereafter abdicated to her son, Pacal II, when he became ritually prepared.[3]

In a patrilineal descent system, children belong to their father's lineage (Hopkins, in press). In table 3, there appear to be three lineages: (1) the original lineage (Chaacal I, Kan Xul II, Chaacal II, Chan Bahlum I, and Lady Kanal Ikal); (2) Pacal I's lineage (Pacal I and Lady Zac Kuk); and (3) Kan Bahlum Mo's lineage (Kan Bahlum Mo, Ac Kan, Pacal II, etc.). The descent line of rulership through Lady Zac Kuk presented a problem for the ruling lineage at Palenque. When the rule passed to Lady Kanal Ikal, the right to rule remained in the original lineage. However, when Lady Kanal Ikal abdicated to her grandson, Ac Kan, the right to rule shifted to the lineage of Ac Kan's father, Kan Bahlum Mo. In the same way, Pacal II is also a member of Kan Bahlum Mo's lineage. Therefore, as table 3 is constructed, a new lineage appears to have taken control at this time. However, ruling lineages, whatever the culture, do not give up their

right to rule (and the considerable power associated with that rule) without resistance.

A common method of keeping the right to rule within the original lineage would have been to marry Lady Zac Kuk to a male who was a member of the original lineage. There is some circumstantial evidence to suggest Kan Bahlum Mo was a patrilineal descendant of Kan Xul I. On the narrative on the Tablet of the Sun, the ruler Kan Xul I is singled out as a particularly important ancestor of Chan Bahlum II. In explaining this focus Josserand (1984, cited in Hopkins, in press) suggested that in addition to being a maternal ancestor Kan Xul I may also have been a patrilineal ancestor through Kan Bahlum Mo (Chan Bahlum II's paternal grandfather).

If we assume that Kan Bahlum Mo was a direct descendant of Kan Xul I, then Kan Xul I would have been both the maternal and paternal great-great-great-grandfather of Chan Bahlum II. In this scenario, all three rulers—Ac Kan, Pacal II, and Chan Bahlum II—not only would be eligible to receive the throne through their descent from Chan Bahlum I and Lady Kanal Ikal, but also they would be members of the original lineage through their patrilineal descent from Kan Xul I and Kan Bahlum Mo.

Evidence that Kan Xul I was an ancestor of Kan Bahlum Mo is found on the sarcophagus box narrative. Although Kan Xul I's death statement is given in the initial episode of the story (the east side), he is not illustrated in the image associated with this text. However, he does appear in the image of the third episode. In this third episode, the text states the deaths of Pacal I, Lady Zac Kuk, and Kan Bahlum Mo. The image below illustrates Pacal I, Lady Kanal Ikal (Lady Zac Kuk's mother and Pacal I's wife), and, most interestingly, Kan Xul I. Kan Xul I's appearance below the death date of Kan Bahlum Mo appears out of place. However, in the other two cases where the image does not illustrate the subject of the text, the actor is the parent of the subject. If Kan Xul I is a paternal ancestor of Kan Bahlum Mo, as suggested by Josserand, his placement directly under the death date of Kan Bahlum Mo is a subtle statement about the lineage affiliation of Kan Bahlum Mo. By extension it also implies that his son, Pacal II, is a legitimate member of the original lineage. Pacal II's parentage statement, birth, and death, which are the climax of the story, follow this episode.

This model presents a logical, simple solution to the descent line problem, but unless new inscriptions with genealogical information are found it must remain pure speculation.

There are a number of portraits on the sarcophagus lid that have not been identified. Six portrait heads appear above and below the image on the lid of the sarcophagus. The heads emerge from the quatrefoil cave opening and are flanked by glyphs. It is unclear

whether these glyphs are naming the actors or the location of the cave. On the legs of the sarcophagus, four portrait heads and the same glyphs appear in the crooks of an undulating shape. Whether these actors are also ancestors remains to be discovered. Given the fact that Pacal II belongs to his father's lineage, I am inclined to think that these are Kan Bahlum Mo's ancestors. In other words, they are the patrilineal ancestors of Pacal II.

The Late Classic Rulers

The dynastic descent line at Palenque is reconstructed from various narratives (table 3). Although no death date is recorded at Palenque for Kan Xul II, Mathews (1983) discovered a monument (M122) at Tonina that depicts a captive with Kan Xul II's nominal phrase on his thigh. The date in the text is too eroded in the haab position to make a secure Calendar Round date. At the very least, this capture of Kan Xul II must have occurred between his accession and the accession of the next Palenque ruler, Chaacal III—that is, between A.D. 702 and 722. The political consequences of Kan Xul II's capture are open to speculation, but there is no archaeological or epigraphic evidence that his death resulted in the subjugation of Palenque by the Tonina polity.

In light of this, let us assume for the moment that there was no disruption in the descent line and that Chaacal III became king because he was the next member of the Palenque ruling lineage in the direct descent line of succession. Who then must Chaacal III have been in relationship to Kan Xul II for this to occur?

In a patrilineal descent system for succession to office, the first choice is the son. Although Chaacal III was of the next generation from Kan Xul II, the Temple XVIII text states that the father of Chaacal III was an individual called Batz Chan.[4] Hence the rule did not shift from father to son. When no direct heir is available, the right to rule passes to a sibling, preferably male, or, if this sibling has predeceased the ruler, to the children of this sibling. This means that, in order for Chaacal III to be in the direct descent line, one of Chaacal III's parents had to have been Kan Xul II's sibling. Let us examine the epigraphic evidence supporting this assumption.

In Chaacal III's accession narrative on the Temple XVIII jamb, Chaacal III is identified as the child of Batz Chan in the initial sentence stating his birth. No maternal parentage is stated. The information given in the narrative is that which is pertinent to the plot of the story. If Chaacal III's right to rule were through his mother we would expect the text to give this vital genealogical information. Thus, Chaacal III's legitimacy appears to be based on the fact that he is the son of Batz Chan.

If Chaacal III was in the direct descent line of succession, Batz Chan must have been the sibling of Kan Xul II—that is, the third son of Pacal II. If this is the case, a simple explanation of why Batz Chan did not take the throne following the death of Kan Xul II is that Batz Chan was already dead at this time. Hence the throne passed to his son, Chaacal III.

Chaacal II's narrative on the Temple XVIII jambs appears to suggest that Chaacal III belonged in the established descent line. In this narrative, the time frame of the story backs up over three thousand years to the mythological accession of Lady Beastie and ties this to the accession of Chaacal III. As noted on the Tablet of the Cross, the narrative also mentions the accession of the mythological Lady Beastie, but this story ties her accession to that of the first mythological male ruler of the Palenque lineage, U K'ix Chan, and his son Kuk I. The subsequent descent line of the early Palenque rulers, beginning with Casper and ending with Chan Bahlum I, is then stated. The Tablet of the Cross story appears to imply that the Palenque rulers received their right to rule from Lady Beastie. By tying the accession of Chaacal III to Lady Beastie's accession, the Temple XVIII story appears to imply that Chaacal III belonged in this same descent line of succession.[5]

The narrative on the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs records the accession in A.D. 764 of the ruler Kuk II, who is stated to be the son of Chaacal III.[6] Kuk II's narrative also appears to imply that he was in the direct line of succession. The first episode begins with the Period Ending event at the *cab* cave of Pacal II on 9.11.0.0.0 (14 October, A.D. 652). The story continues with an undeciphered event by Pacal II that occurred two years later at the *sac tun na* cave. The second episode of the story begins with the use of a special Distance Number, and the time frame moves forward forty-eight years to the accession of Kan Xul II, then some nineteen years to the accession of Chaacal III, and then forty-two years more to the accession of Kuk II—all of which occurred at the *sac tun na* cave. The story climaxes with the first katun anniversary of Kuk II's accession (24 November, A.D. 783), which occurred at the *cab* cave of Pacal II.

The questions arise of why Kuk II's narrative would begin with Pacal II, and why Kuk II performed his rituals at the cave associated with Pacal II. If my interpretation of Batz Chan as the third son of Pacal II is correct, the reason is that Pacal II was the paternal great-grandfather of Kuk II.

The appearance of Kan Xul II in the second episode is curious. However, on the Tablet of the Slaves and the Palace Tablet, the story indirectly suggests the birth of the protagonist by beginning the episode with the accession of the ruler during whose reign the protagonist is born. Chaacal III was twenty-four years old when the

ruler Kan Xul II acceded to the throne and forty-three years old when he himself became king. Although no birthdate is known for his son Kuk II, there is a strong possibility that Kuk II was born during the reign of Kan Xul II. If this is the case, then the second episode of the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs may begin with the accession of Kan Xul II for this reason.

Chaacal III took his name from the members of the original lineage, just as the previous rulers, Chan Bahlum II and Kan Xul II, did. This suggests that he belongs in the direct descent line. Kuk II took his name from the mythological ruler named in the Cross Group narrative, which again suggests that he also belongs in the direct descent line.

Given that there is no evidence in the narratives of Chaacal III and Kuk II to suggest they were not in the direct descent line of succession, a tentative argument can be made that no disruption occurred when the rule passed from Kan Xul II to Chaacal III. This model assumes that Kan Xul II had no direct male descendant; that Chaacal III's father, Batz Chan, was the third son of Pacal II; and that Batz Chan died before Kan Xul II. None of these assumptions is unreasonable. However, unless new inscriptions are found pertaining to this time period, they too must remain speculations.

Notes

Introduction

1. I employ the Thompson correlation constant of 584,285. If this correlation constant is used, the zero base date used by most Classic Maya Long Count dates is 13 August, 3114 B.C. In my text, dates are stated as backdated Gregorian dates.

Several Maya hieroglyphic texts refer to events that preceded this base date. Because Mesoamerican mythology contains reference to a cyclical creation and destruction of the world, this zero base date has been interpreted to represent the beginning of a new creation. This interpretation has not been proven. No evidence has been found to explain why the Maya chose this particular date as a base. Readers are referred to Kelley (1976:30–33) for a review of the correlation problem.

Chapter 1

1. The sixteenth-century bishop of Yucatan, Diego de Landa, quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, obtained what he thought was an alphabet from a Maya informant (Tozzer 1941:170). Although it is obvious that Landa did not understand the Maya writing system, he did end up with a list of syllabic CV signs that roughly correspond to the pronunciation of the names of the Spanish letters.

2. Knorozov (1963) proposed a principle of synharmony, in which the CV signs in word-final position used only their consonantal value. The silent vowel would agree with the vowel of the preceding phonetic sign. Enough evidence exists for this principle to be accepted. Other principles are also used. Fox and Justeson (1984) and Closs (1986) discuss other ways in which words might have been "spelled out." These principles are not yet firmly established.

3. The name phrase of Pacal II of Palenque usually consists of two parts. The first is the T624 pictograph of a shield (fig. 3d). Kelley (1976:181, 208) suggested that the T624 "shield" was included as a semantic determinative to indicate a meaning of shield for *pacal* or that the spelling *pa-ka-l(a)* was included as a phonetic supplement to indicate the correct pronunciation of the "shield" glyph. While I accept the principle of phonetic complements being added to pictographs to clarify pronunciations, I cannot accept the notion that the Maya would first draw a pictograph and then immediately duplicate the entire word with a complete phonetic rendering. There is no evidence for this kind of redundancy anywhere else in the texts.

The name phrase of Pacal I found in the sarcophagus lid text is written with both the T624 "shield" and a T537 "shield" without the phonetic *pa-ka-l(a)* (fig. 3e). This strongly suggests that the T537 "shield" substitutes for the phonetic *pa-ka-l(a)* and that the T624 "shield" represents a separate name.

4. I thank Nick Hopkins for explaining Maya compound nouns to me and for providing these examples.

5. The specific actions performed in the Period Ending events and the location of these actions are discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

6. The Aztec system had nine "lords of the night" that ruled successive days. J. E. S. Thompson (1929) argued that the nine glyphs of Glyph G represented the Maya equivalents of these deities. Based on this structural similarity, this interpretation of the Glyph G is widely accepted. It is most curious, however, that none of these glyphs is a portrait. I am reluctant to assume this meaning until these glyphs have been deciphered.

7. Except in circumstances where it is necessary to distinguish between GII and God K, these two deities will be referred to simply as God K.

8. Lounsbury was able to place the Calendar Round dates securely in Long Count positions for all of the dates, except that of Lady Kanal Ikal's death. The tzolkin position of Lady Kanal Ikal's death is clearly 2 Eb, and the month position is Ceh. However, the superfix on the Ceh that records the number of the month was unfamiliar to epigraphers at that time. By interpreting the superfix on the month position Ceh to mean 20, Lounsbury placed the Long Count position for the death of Lady Kanal Ikal (his date H) at 9.8.11.6.12 2 Eb 20 Ceh (7 November, A.D. 604). Lounsbury based his choice on the assumption that the death of the ruler Lady Kanal Ikal (his Date H) should be earlier than the accession of the next ruler, Ac Kan (his Date I). However, this is not necessarily the case, since another female ruler, Lady Zac Kuk, is known to have lived past the accession of her son Pacal II. In fact, the superfix on the Ceh is a conflation of a main sign and head infix that is found on the T644 "seating" glyph. Therefore, Lady Kanal Ikal's death date is 2 Eb seating of Ceh, which has a Long Count position of 9.9.11.10.12 (13 October, A.D. 624). Further evidence that this is the seating of Ceh is found in the fact that the main sign of this Ceh glyph also has a "seating" verb conflated with it. The change in the death date of Lady Kanal Ikal requires that the genealogy of Palenque be modified. This change is discussed in the appendix.

Chapter 2

1. The story continues on the back of Stela 1, but it is too eroded to decipher.

2. The back of Stela 6, like that of Stela 1, is too eroded to analyze.

3. The "Venus star" event has been glossed as a reference to "war" (Riese 1982, Lounsbury 1982). This interpretation is not based on a reading of the glyph, but on its association with the "axe" event and the captive in the image (this captive is labeled on the Dos Pilas monument as a Seibal lord).

Although the war interpretation seems reasonable, I find it curious that in scenes of Maya warfare, the weapon that is predominantly illustrated is not an axe, but a spear. The "axe" event could refer to the making of lightning (the rain god

threw his axe and created lightning) or other uses of axes, such as the felling of trees. On Madrid codex page 89, a corn god stands before a tree with a raised axe in his hand (Kelley 1976:64). The verb in the associated text contains the axe.

Based on the war interpretation of the "star" event, it has been suggested that "powerful Maya kings considered the position of the planet Venus to be a guide to victory" (Schele and Miller 1986:214). However, there is nothing in the ethnohistorical literature to suggest that Venus played this role in Maya culture. I do not believe that our present understanding of Classic Maya society allows us to make such bold statements based purely on the interpretation of Maya hieroglyphs.

4. This story uses constructions of the form "auxiliary verb + *ti* + verbal noun," which have been discussed in Josserand, Schele, and Hopkins (1985). They have demonstrated that the verbal noun in these constructions refers to the object being held by the actor in the image.

5. These paraphrasings are not glyph-by-glyph translations but simply attempts to give the general meaning of the sentence. The elaborate Maya verbal and nominal phrases add a great deal of information about the events in the image.

6. As noted earlier, the cahal title was carried by males who were not rulers but appear to have been lords of secondary importance, who perhaps played a military role or headed a subsidiary town.

7. As mentioned previously, the lintels of Structure 23 have text on the outer edge as well as the underside. The inscription on the central doorway begins on the underside and concludes on the outer edge. In order to read the text of this lintel in the correct order, viewers had to approach the lintel from the inside of the building. This suggests that viewers read the narrative found on the Structure 23 lintels by winding in and out of the building in a "snaking motion." They approached the first lintel in the end doorway of the building and read its outer edge. Stepping into the doorway, they read the underside of the lintel and then continued into the building. Walking inside the building the viewers moved to the central doorway, read the underside of the lintel, and walked outside the building to read the outer edge. From there, they walked along the outside of the building to the last doorway and lintel. This "snaking motion" is far more convenient than turning around and backing out, especially if more than one person is standing in line to read the lintel (the small doorway can only accommodate one person).

Yaxchilan Structure 12 has lintels spanning all of its front doorways and at least one of the side doors. If the lintels of Structure 12 are to be read in order, using the snaking motion, the viewers would begin with the center doorway and then move to the left (when facing the building). Snaking in and out of the building, they would end up at the last doorway. The text apparently continued on the lintel of the side doorway on the opposite end of the building. Walking the full length of the inside of the building, the viewers would then once again snake in and out of the doorways and finally arrive at the doorway immediately to the right of the central doorway, where the text ends. Because the buildings of Yaxchilan do not appear to have a consistent starting point to begin reading the inscription (Structure 33 begins in the left doorway, Structure 23 begins in the right doorway, and Structure 12 begins in the center doorway), I suspect that there may have been some decoration on the outside of the building that would have directed the viewer to a particular doorway.

8. Historically, there has been a long debate over the identification of both the liquid and the drops. Spinden (1913:67) identified the liquid as water. J. E. S. Thompson (1950:193) noted the similarity of this liquid to the emblem glyph prefix and called these prefixes the "water group." Seler and Barthel both identified the prefix of emblem glyphs as blood (Kelley 1976:215). D. Stuart argued in favor of Seler and Barthel's blood identification for the emblem glyph prefix because the various elements found in this prefix are also found in the hand-scattered scrolls of blood. MacLeod, Mathews, Reents, Schele, and D. Stuart all independently identi-

fied the liquid depicted in scenes of hand-scattering at Yaxchilan as blood (cited in Schele 1983:67).

9. Because Love (1987) interprets drops as incense, he refers to the bag being held by the hand-scattering ruler on Piedras Negras Stela 40 as an incense bag. However, even if these drops are incense, we cannot simply assume that the bag is directly related to the incense. The bag could just as easily contain other ritual paraphernalia.

10. In many cases, the erosion of one side of a stela has helped create a false impression about those who erected it. For example, at Yaxchilan a number of the stelae illustrate a ruler with captives. This apparent change in theme from the ruler holding ceremonial objects to the ruler victorious in warfare led to the speculation that Yaxchilan was involved in more warfare than other sites. However, Tate (1986) has pointed out that these stelae were double-sided, with the eroded side following the more traditional themes found at other sites. Had the stelae fallen in the other direction, scholars would not have formed this false impression.

11. Robertson (1983:23) has argued that because of the perspective used on these piers, the scenes were intended to be viewed from the plaza below. However, the stucco inscriptions that begin on Pier A could not have been seen from such a distance, which suggests that they were intended to be read once the viewer approached the temple.

12. The figures the actors hold in their arms are badly eroded, but enough remains to indicate that these figures are babies with serpent scales (Kubler 1969:27). Robertson (1983) made a composite of the piers to demonstrate that each figure has a God K head and a serpent foot. God K takes a baby form in several examples of his portrait glyph, which suggests that these figures are simply manikin scepters of God K in an infant stage.

Kubler equated this scene with Bonampak Room 1, where an actor presents a young child to a group of lords. In two of the piers, the right foot of the God K has six toes. In one clear example and two possible examples, the ruler Chan Bahlum II is illustrated with six toes (Robertson, Scandizzo & Scandizzo 1976:70). Based on this evidence, Robertson and Schele have identified the figures of the baby God K shown on the Temple of the Inscriptions piers as a young Chan Bahlum II (cited in Robertson 1983:33). In the other seven illustrations of Chan Bahlum II, he clearly does not have six toes, and for this reason I cannot accept their argument that this is a diagnostic trait of Chan Bahlum II. Furthermore, if these actors are the ancestors of Pacal II (and by extension the ancestors of his son Chan Bahlum II), this would mean that dead actors are illustrated interacting with living actors. As will be discussed in chapter 7, no such interaction is found anywhere in Maya art.

13. Ruz (1973: fig. 248) suggests that the box was quarried from the rock that surrounds the base of the temple. Moises Morales (pers. comm. 1986) notes that the box is of a different quality of limestone than the limestone surrounding the Temple of the Inscriptions.

14. The second lid could still have been placed initially on the elevated platform. This would allow better access to the box, and would also allow the lid sculptors to work simultaneously with the box sculptors.

Chapter 3

1. Modern agricultural rites include Chac ceremonies in association with certain phases of the moon. The *Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimin* states that the Bacabs shake the yaxche and the moon germinates the plants (Makemson 1951:41). The implication is that the shaking of the yaxche by the Bacabs produces the rain that is necessary for the young plants to begin to grow. This appears to indicate that the participants of the Cha Chac ceremony are imitating the actions of the Bacabs.

The Bacabs in their Pauahtun (wind god) and Chac (lightning) aspects, could carry the titles "Bringer of Winds and "Keeper of Lightning."

2. In many of the Kanjobalan languages, the word *ch'en,* which has an etymological meaning of "cave," is an innovation used to express the word "stone" (Justeson & Mathews 1983:588). For example, a Kanjobalan term for cave is *na ch'en* which translates as "the house of the stone." I believe that the innovation of using the word *ch'en* 'cave' to refer to "stone" occurred because the cave was the location of the most sacred of stones, the stalagmite.

3. For ease of discussion, I will use the term *stalagmite* to include both stalagmites and stalactites, except where it is necessary to distinguish between the two types of drip-water stones.

4. The *na'-ch'en* referred to in this quotation had signs of ancient ritual use.

5. A visual relationship between the moon and a rainbow is seen in the rainbow-like halo that forms around the moon on misty nights.

6. This interpretation is not limited to the Maya area. Heyden (1975), Grove (1973), and Schavelzon (1980) discuss similar cave symbols found in Mesoamerican art.

7. The T561 sign also appears as the patron of Tzec, and this sign will be discussed below.

8. Nicholas A. Hopkins (pers. comm. 1989) has called to my attention that some of Lounsbury's glosses do not correspond to the Chol forms and their meanings; these have accordingly been corrected here.

9. At the 1987 American Anthropological Association meetings, I presented brief arguments for the cave being the location of the Period Ending rituals, first lineage events, and accession events (Bassie 1987). At that time, I was unaware of Pohl and Pohl's article (1983) in which they discuss the possibility that many of the scenes found both on public monuments and on pottery illustrate cave ceremonies.

10. The equivalency of T529 with T528 is demonstrated on Tonina Monument 106, where the "seating of the tun" normally recorded with T528 uses T529 instead. It is likely that the split found in T529 is related to the split made by the rain god in order to obtain the corn of the cave.

11. A variety of sculptured and unsculptured stones found in front of stelae and buildings have been labeled altars, although there is no conclusive evidence that they functioned as such.

12. Schele and M. Miller (1986:47) describe this element as "water stacks." In the water, this element alternates with a second element that has been identified as a shell.

13. Tony Hansen of Plainsman Clay, Medicine Hat, Alberta (pers. comm. 1988), notes that calcium carbonate, which is the main component of stalagmites, is added to clay to lower its firing temperature. An association between a stalagmite stone and clay objects is found in the Tzotil area where stalagmites are ground up and added to clay in the production of pottery (Nash 1970; W. F. Morris, pers. comm. 1988). It would have been most appropriate if the incense burner of the Period Ending ceremony was made with material from the sacred stalagmite.

14. When lightning strikes sand or volcanic rock, the intense heat of the lightning changes the sand into glass tubes called fulgurite. Although fulgurite is fragile, it visually resembles obsidian and flint. Thus the belief that obsidian and flint were created by lightning may have been based on real-world observations (David Miller, geophysicist, pers. comm. 1986).

15. The word *katun* (phonetic *k'atun*) is apparently derived from the Mayan word *k'al,* which means "twenty," combined with *tun* (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:145). Kelley (1976:33) noted that although the T25.528:548 glyph has the meaning of twenty tuns, the *ca* affixes (phonetic *ka*) could not be used for *k'a* because the Maya rigorously distinguished between plain *k* and glottalized *k'*.

16. The Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus sides illustrate a series of trees and bushes that have the same trunks and leaves but different fruit hanging from their branches (Ruz Lhuillier 1958, 1973; J. E. S. Thompson 1970; Robertson 1983). Because in reality each of these fruit trees and bushes has its own distinctive shape, the trunk and leaves used on the sarcophagus must be generic symbols for trees and bushes. The pictographic tree sign used in the *te tun* glyph is such a generic symbol. On a looted panel illustrated in Coe (1973:31), the *te* glyph is found in a compound sign with T526 *cab* 'beehive' elements attached to the trunk.

Chapter 4

1. The toad is also associated with birth, for the commonest verb for birth is a toad (or frog) head in an upended position. The term for fetus in Tzotzil also means "toad" (Morris 1985). Perhaps these poorly understood birth expressions are reflections of the cave as a location of birth.

2. Roys (1965:xiv) notes that "arbors" and a term meaning "small hut" are found in the same context in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*. The *Ritual of the Bacabs* refers to an "arbor" that is constructed of a particular kind of tree with vines binding it together. The incantations say that "raised aloft would be the post of the canopy, raised aloft would be the post of the arbor." In the niche scenes from Piedras Negras, the ruler sits on a scaffolding-like structure with a canopy on top. As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, the niche scenes are Period Ending rituals conducted at cave locations. I would suggest that the arbors in these incantations are similar "canopied huts." Postholes have been found both inside and outside caves, a finding that supports this interpretation (J. Pohl, pers. comm. 1987).

3. *Tamoanchan* is a Maya word meaning "at cloud sky" or "cloud serpent." In Postclassic Mexican sources, it is called the "land of rain and mist" or the home of the rain god (J. E. S. Thompson 1950:115; Kelley 1980:25; Closs cited in Carlson & Landis 1985:120).

4. This "*na* five T561 sky" compound is also found labeling a *cauac* monster at Copan (D. Stuart, pers. comm. 1987).

5. The somewhat odd association of the cave with fish may be explained by the fact that caves are often created by erosion of underground rivers. On the Tikal Bones MT-51a and MT-51b, Chacs are illustrated grasping fish. The Chacs are located on a river. There is nothing in these images to indicate whether they are fishing in a cave river, or in a river in the outside world. However, on Tikal Bone MT 38a, which illustrates the same kind of canoe with the same water symbols, the text uses the "Venus over the *cab* cave" verb, indicating that this location is inside a cave.

6. Several other scenes also have birth themes. On Xultun Stela 3, the image illustrates the ruler holding up a baby jaguar deity (von Euw 1978). Other examples from Xutun also show the ruler holding up a baby jaguar deity in his hand.

Dos Pilas Stela 17 illustrates a Period Ending ritual on 9.12.10.0.0 9 Ahau 18 Zotz (10 May, A.D. 682) and contains a hand-scattering autosacrifice verb in the text (Greene, Rands & Graham 1972: pl. 93). An assemblage that has been referred to as a backrack appears directly behind him. This assemblage contains the sky band of the cave in an enclosure shape, with the bird deity perched on top. A baby jaguar deity emerges from the enclosure, suggesting that the autosacrifice of the ruler results in the birth of this baby jaguar deity.

On Lords of the Underworld Vase 14 (Coe 1978:98), a similar backrack is illustrated, and in this example the jaguar emerges from the quatrefoil cave opening of a *cauac* monster. Like the *cauac* monster/cave on the Tablet of the Foliated Cross, these backracks are symbols that represent the location of the event.

7. The "fish-in-hand" verb may be related to the birth theme. Although I have no specific reading for the "fish-in-hand" verb, Mary Pohl (1981:525) has noted a Chorti belief that the fish is the offspring of the serpent. If the Chorti belief relates to

this verb, then the hand grasping the fish in this verb may be related to the birth metaphor of the cave. This is in accordance with the images on Yaxhilan Lintels 38, 39, and 40, where the verb is "fish-in-hand" and the actors hold the symbol of the cave passage (the double-headed serpent) with deities emerging from the serpents' mouths. Furthermore, in the *Popol Vuh,* the hero twins appear as fish in an Underworld river and then are reborn (D. Tedlock 1985:149).

8. Another association between an umbilical cord and the serpent may be found in the name glyph of GII of the Palenque Triad. GII's name glyph is composed of a reclining baby with an obsidian mirror in its forehead (fig. 5e, f). An axe head with smoke curls protrudes from the mirror. A *ca* sign and an umbilical cord are found above and between his knees. A deity quite similar to GII is known by the alphabet designation of God K. The only difference between these two deities is that God K lacks the umbilical cord, and one of his legs is in the form of a serpent (fig. 5g). This suggests that the umbilical cord and one leg have been replaced by the serpent.

9. Perhaps the father cut the umbilical cord of his child with the stingray spine perforator, and this may explain the appearance of the perforator in the parentage statement on the Palenque Tablet of the 96 Glyphs.

10. In regard to a semipersonified disease, the Bacabs are also stated to have "husked his surplus part" (Roys 1965:40). In a modern birth ritual, Ximenez (cited in Edmonson 1971:108) noted that the umbilical cord was placed over an ear of corn and cut with a virgin blade. The bloodied corn was then husked and the kernels saved for planting. Thus the "husking of the surplus part" would refer to this second part of the umbilical cord ritual.

Chapter 5

1. Kubler (1969) identified pre-accession rituals in Classic images. Lounsbury (1980:107) first identified the occurrence of pre-accession events in the hieroglyphic texts. Several different verbs have been grouped together and labeled the "heir designation" event (Schele 1984). The only thing these verbs have in common is that they are the first noted event in a subject's life. I am not convinced that these events specify heir designation; I prefer the more neutral term *first lineage event,* which was suggested to me by Kathryn Josserand.

2. Although there are buildings in the Maya region that are decorated with *cauac* heads, as well as temple doorways that represent the open mouth of the *cauac* monster, there are also platforms, small temples, and other structures found both inside and immediately outside caves. I believe the Lintel 3 platform is located inside a cave.

3. In the main text passage referring to the birth of GI, there is a glyph (at E4) composed of a T188 main sign surrounded by sprouts or leaves. T188 is read *le,* meaning "lineage" (Kelley 1976:6). The appearance of foliage on the *le* glyph at E4 suggests that this is the glyph for the ceiba tree, the sacred tree of the lineage that is found in the Tablet of the Cross image. However, this interpretation of E4 is unproven.

4. In the caption text from TFC, D. Stuart (1987:38) and Schele (1987a) have identified a glyph (at F1) that is phonetically read as *pib na.* They believe this is a reference to the Cross Group temples themselves. The gloss for *pib* cited by Stuart is "a hot water or steam bath for women who have recently given birth or who are ill." Stuart suggested that the inner sanctuary of the temples might have been a sweat bath. This seems unlikely, since these inner sanctuaries were decorated with stuccoes, which could hardly survive the changing heat and humidity of a sweat bath. However, if the narratives of the texts are referring to cave locations as the sites of the rituals being commemorated, then a sweat bath in a cave is more plausible. Indeed, Tarn and Prechtel (1986:184) note that caves are thought of as sweat baths in the Tzutujil area.

5. It is possible that this scene is illustrating the ruler sitting in a niche in the wall of a cave. The scaffold-like structure below the ruler may have been the ladder the ruler used to climb up to the niche.

6. These cartouches may represent the cavern of the cave.

Chapter 6

1. A directional association for the moon goddess may be found in some of the Dresden codex examples of the moon goddess's nominal glyph. Her portrait glyph has the *cab* sign infixed above her ear and a *sac* glyph prefixed to her forehead. This *sac* glyph is found on page 67b of the Dresden codex, prefixed to the *cab* cave enclosure. Because *sac* 'white' is associated with north, this could be specifying that this moon goddess and this *cab* cave are associated with the north. On Rio Azul Tomb 12, directional glyphs are found painted on the appropriate walls. Preceding each directional glyph is an unidentified head variant glyph with two superfixes. One is a variable sign and the other the *ah po* 'lord' compound. On the north wall, this variable element is the "cenote/cave" cartouche of the moon goddess, which suggests that once again the moon is associated with the north.

Thompson noted that the *sac* on the *cab* enclosure found on Dresden codex page 67b could be combined to produce *sackab* 'white earth', which is defined as "roca calcarea deleznable, de color claro" (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:708, "a brittle calcareous rock of clear color"). Because *cab* with the meaning of "earth" is far less common in Maya languages, I suggest that the *sac* sign on the *cab* enclosure is labeling this cave as being associated with the color white and by extension, with the direction north.

2. T566 is prefixed with a phonetic T114 *xa* sign (D. Stuart 1987:28) and subfixed with a phonetic T23 *na* (Lounsbury 1984). Closs (1988:387) asserted that these phonetic complements require that this "serpent-segment" compound be read *xaman,* the Yucatec word for "north." In this context, he argued that the T566 "serpent-segment" sign is itself a phonetic CV (or CVC) sign for the syllable *ma* or *man.* But this interpretation requires that the T566 "serpent-segment" glyph be polyvalent, because in other contexts T566 clearly has the pronunciation of *chan* (Chol) or *can* (Yucatec) (Houston 1984). Bricker (1983) suggested that the phonetic subfix *na* implies a reading of *chan* or *can* for T566.

These various decipherments of the T566 sign exemplify a basic problem in understanding the nature of the hieroglyphic system: does the glyph carry a pictographic, that is, semantic value, or does it simply represent a CV syllable, or does it do both? If the phonetic complement *xa* is used to qualify some aspect of the pictographic value of the T566 serpent, T114.566.23 could be interpreted as representing a serpent associated with the north. There is precedence for this in the treatment of the T528 glyph, which has phonetic complements to indicate one of the various possible readings of the glyph (*tun, witz, cauac*) and thus to emphasize a specific quality of the pictograph (stone, year, mountain, lightning, rain, thunder). However, T528 does not represent a CV or CVC sound in these contexts. I believe that the T114.566:23 sign is read *xaman* but that it refers to a "north serpent." Evidence to support this belief may be found in the title phrase of a Tortuguero ruler. On Tortuguero Stela 6 (C8b), this title is composed of the *xa* prefix and *na* suffix, while the main sign is the T561 *chan* 'sky' sign. In this example, T561 must have the value of *chan,* for there is no evidence that T561 is also a polyvalent sign with the value *ma.*

3. J. E. S. Thompson (1950:212–17) and Berlin and Kelley (1961) demonstrated that the Maya used a cycle consisting of four periods of 819 days. Each time a new 819-day period began, some event (the verb is undeciphered) was carried out by God K or in his honor. Each 819-day count is associated with a particular direction and appropriate color. God K's association with this quadripartite cycle suggests that he too was found at the four mythological caves on the horizons.

4. I have discussed in chapter 3 the stalagmite's visual association with the yaxche or ceiba tree. It would be very interesting if such a drip-water formation in the recesses of a cave was the source of the myth that "heaven" had a ceiba tree.

5. Macaws are associated with caves in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel,* where a macaw is said to warm the first maize kernels behind the *acantun* (Roys 1933:111). The cave of Pecmo is located on Macaw Rock (J. E. S. Thompson 1975:xxix). The association of birds with mountains is also found on the Tablet of the Sun from Palenque, where there is a reference to a *k'uk-te-wits.* A literal translation of this phrase would be "the quetzal tree of the mountain."

6. In a Period Ending expression from Machaquila Stela 11, a variation of the "dawn" glyph occurs with "four" superfixed to the T561 "sky" sign (fig. 44j).

7. It is interesting to note that the Venus/Sun monster also appears in the north temple of the Cross Group at Palenque.

8. D. Stuart (1985b) has phonetically read the main sign of the Yaxha emblem glyph as *yaxha* 'blue-green water' (or possibly "first water"). The site of Yaxha was named by modern explorers after Lake Yaxha on which it is situated. Yaxha was the seventeenth-century name of Lake Yaxha and appears to be its indigenous name. Stuart argued that the name of the lake might also have been that of the town and its associated polity. He concluded that, if this were so, then emblem glyphs were place-names that referred to the site or possibly the surrounding polity. Naming a town after a prominent geographical feature is an attested tradition in Mesoamerica, but what I find more intriguing is the fact that the Lacandon rain deity lives in a cave at the edge of a lake of the same name (J. E. S. Thompson 1970:266).

9. D. Tedlock (1985:370) suggests a reading of "little jaguar sun." Edmonson (1971) translated *Xbalanque* as "Jaguar Deer." Whether this name means "deer" or "sun" may not be significant. The animal most commonly associated with the sun is the deer. In the Classic hieroglyphic texts, the head variant for *kin* (sun or day) in Distance Numbers is a deer. One reason for this association may be that deer are most active at dawn and dusk, which define the limits of the day.

10. Schele has noted that Glyph X, which follows Glyph C, is composed of a series of variants that occur only with certain Glyph C heads. The jaguar deity of Glyph C is associated with Glyph X2b, which shows God C emerging from the mouth of the cave serpent (fig. 62i). It is of some interest that other forms of Glyph X include a God C inside the *cauac* cave enclosure (fig. 62j) or a pair of legs seated over the "cenote" enclosure (fig. 62k).

11. One Hunahpu/sun also had two sons, who were both called Monkey. As noted in chapter 1, the full figure variant of the sun is a monkey.

12. It may be of some interest that the four-day interval between GI's and GIII's birth is almost the difference between the full Venus cycle of 2,920 days and the 99 synodic lunar months of 2,923.53 days.

Chapter 7

1. The text and iconography of the three Cross Tablets have been studied at length by a number of scholars. Readers are referred to Robertson's overview of these works (Robertson, in press).

2. Kubler (1972) was the first to choose this reading order, based on his observation that the TC mentions only GI, the TS mentions only GI and GIII, and the TFC mentions all three. Berlin (1963, 1965) and Schele (1974a, 1976) preferred a different order: TC, TFC, and TS. Cohodas (1976) chose a third order: TS, TC, and TFC. Josserand (1984, 1987), Clancy (1986), and I have used Kubler's order: TC, TS, TFC. This is the order in which the tablets will be discussed in this chapter.

3. The verb used in this event is a *chan* head variant and may refer to a cave event. Although this date is a Period Ending date, the verb used is not a standard Period Ending verb.

4. The 2 Cib events are a series of three events occurring over a period of four days. Because they use the *hel* Distance Number Introductory Glyph and *hel* Distance Numbers rather than standard Distance Numbers, the events form a unit and are to be treated as such (Kathryn Josserand, pers. comm.). The first event occurred on 9.12.18.5.16 2 Cib 14 Mol (23 July, A.D. 690). The verb of this event has been nicknamed the "inverted sky" event, but it is undeciphered. Its subject appears to be one or more of the Palenque Triad of gods. The second event occurred the next day on 9.12.18.5.17 3 Caban 15 Mol. It includes a God N event and a house event. The object of this event appears to be an ancestor, Kuk I, while its subject is Chan Bahlum II. The third event in the 2 Cib series occurs on 9.12.18.5.19 5 Cauac 17 Mol (26 July). It contains a verbal couplet that includes a "fish-in-hand" and a "bundle-in-hand" expression. The sequence concludes with an "anniversary" event (T79:181:178) and an undeciphered phrase that includes a Chac variant as subject.

Lounsbury has noted that the T79:181:178 verb is found on other dates that appear to be on or near tropical year anniversaries of various events. These dates are near to the seventy-fifth tropical year anniversary of Pacal's accession (the 5 Cauac date is two days short of the anniversary and 2 Cib is five days short). Lounsbury has noted that on the 2 Cib date Jupiter and Saturn were in conjunction (Thompson correlation).

5. Although this was unknown to me when I circulated the first draft of this interpretation, Moises Morales (pers. comm.) and Floyd Lounsbury (pers. comm.) have both argued for the identification of the small actor as the young Chan Bahlum II.

6. This convention is not consistent even in depictions of the same actor. For example, on Lintel 1, Lady Great Skull is illustrated as considerably shorter than her husband. On Lintel 13, however, which illustrates an event a few months previous to the Lintel 1 event, she is shown almost as tall as Bird Jaguar.

7. The meaning of the events described in this and the following paragraphs is unknown. They are named for elements in their verbs.

8. On the Temple XVIII jambs, which were produced after the Cross Group, the accession of Lady Beastie is stated to have occurred on 9 Ik O Zac. The Distance Number, which ties Lady Beastie's accession to the accession of the Temple XVIII protagonist, securely places the 9 Ik 0 Zac accession at the Long Count position of 2.0.0.10.2 (8 September, 2325 B.C.).

On the TC, the birth of Lady Beastie (3121 B.C.) is tied by a Distance Number to her accession. Although the Calendar Round date for the accession of Lady Beastie is stated to be 9 Ik 0 Zac, the Distance Number leads to the date 2.1.0.15.2 3 Ik 0 Zac (3 September, 2305 B.C.). The next sentence leads by a new Distance Number from a 9 Ik date to the birth of an individual named U K'ix Chan on 1 Kan 2 Cumku. The haab position is not stated for this 9 Ik date, but by subtracting the Distance Number from 1 Kan 2 Cumku, a date of 9 Ik 0 Yax is retrieved. If we assume no calendrical errors were made in these passages, there occurred four separate events: Lady Beastie's accession on 9 Ik 0 Zac (8 September, 2325 B.C.); a deleted event on 3 Ik 0 Zac (14 August, 2305 B.C.); another deleted event on 9 Ik 0 Yax (3 September, 2305 B.C.); and U K'ix Chan's birth on 1 Kan 2 Cumku (993 B.C.).

If we assume, however, that the first Distance Number is wrong, then there would be no event on 3 Ik 0 Zac. If we assume that both Distance Numbers are in error, we can go so far as to conclude that only the accession and birth occurred. Assuming that both the Distance Number and Calendar Round in the accession sentence are errors, the conclusion is that the accession of Lady Beastie actually occurred on 9 Ik 0 Yax (Lounsbury 1976:219). Schele (1987a) argued for this double error.

In her argument, Schele speculated that the author of the Temple XVIII jambs knowingly repeated the alleged "error" of 9 Ik 0 Zac from the TC because it was more important to be consistent with this "written" information than to be accurate.

However, Lounsbury (1976:220) notes that the Temple XVIII Distance Number is similar to several others in that it is an integral multiple of several important Maya cycles. This lends support to the notion that 2.0.0.10.2 9 Ik 0 Zac (8 September, 2325 B.C.) is the accession date.

I am inclined to believe that the information concerning deities was drawn from knowledge that was well established. Although I have no doubt that the Palencanos tailored their stories to suit their own purposes, I believe that the accession of Lady Beastie was considered an established fact. Even if we conclude that 9 Ik 0 Zac is the correct date for the accession, we are still left with the problem of deciding whether the Distance Numbers are implying deleted events or whether they are in error. Unless further inscriptions that refer to this time period are found, we can only speculate.

9. Following basic calendrical rules, the Long Count position for Kuk I's accession date of 1 Kan 2 Kayab would be the first position of this date following the 5.8.17.15.17 11 Caban seating of Pop (28 March, 967 B.C.) accession of U K'ix Chan. This is 5.11.4.7.4 1 Kan 2 Kayab (2 February, 921 B.C.). There is precedent for this interpretation in Lounsbury's and Schele's treatment of the Long Count positions for the accessions of the next rulers (Schele 1987a). However, Schele has assigned the Calendar Round of his accession to a Long Count position just before the birth of the ruler nicknamed "Casper."

Casper's birth and accession are securely tied to the 9.0.0.0.0 8 Ahau 13 Ceh Period Ending event (11 December, A.D. 435). By assigning Kuk I to this time period, the episode concerning Kuk I would have to jump forward some thirteen hundred years, without any indication to the reader that it has done so. Furthermore, the story would then introduce a new subject (Casper), still without alerting the reader to a major change in the time frame. My Long Count positions for Kuk I's birth and accession dates are based on the assumption that Calendar Round dates are to be assigned to the nearest sequential Long Count position in the time frame, unless information is given in the text to indicate otherwise.

10. The date, verb, and subject are deleted from this passage, but the Distance Number implies this event. Although this Distance Number has been treated as an error (Schele 1987a), the same structure is used to imply a pre-accession event for the rulers Chan Bahlum I and Pacal II. On the Palenque Temple of the Inscriptions West Tablet, at E1–F7, a Distance Number appears to lead from the birth of Pacal II to his accession. However, again the Distance Number does not reach the accession date but a date six uinals earlier. On the TC, at K15–L17, a Distance Number appears to lead from the birth of Chan Bahlum I to his accession. However, the actual Distance Number leads to a date before the accession. Unless we are willing to accept the fact that three identical mistakes were made, these Distance Numbers are indicating a deleted date and pre-accession event. Kubler (1969:9) and Lounsbury (1980:107) noted the appearance of pre-accession rituals in the image and text, respectively. Since this deleted event is referred to in the context of an accession, I suggest the Distance Numbers refer to similar pre-accession rituals.

11. Both of these rulers were six years old on the occasion of their first lineage events. Why Kuk I should be singled out as a particularly important ancestor of Chan Bahlum II is discussed in the appendix.

12. A "shell" glyph is used in the kin position in Distance Numbers, while Initial Series use the T544 *kin* glyph. This "Distance Number" uses the T544 *kin* glyph.

13. This Distance Number has been treated as an error because it does not connect the 2 Cib event to any of the previously mentioned events. If this Distance Number is not an error, however, it must refer to a deleted event on 2.5.11.2.0. I am inclined to believe that this is another case of deleted information.

14. On Temple XVIII, Chaacal's accession is stated to have occurred on this date, using the more common T700 "seating" verb.

15. The death date for Pacal II is stated in the Palace Tablet and the Temple of the Inscriptions as 9.12.11.5.18 6 Etznab 11 Yax (31 August, A.D. 683). The death date for Lady Ahpo Hel is stated on the Temple of the Inscriptions as 9.12.0.6.18 5 Etznab 6 Kankin (16 November, A.D. 672) (Mathews & Schele 1974).

16. Although Schele (1982, 1988, Schele & M. Miller 1986) and Dütting (1984) do not associate this caption text with Chan Bahlum II, they have identified the right-hand actor as Chan Bahlum II, using other criteria.

17. I thank Ben Leaf for pointing out this toponym to me.

18. Dütting (1984) and Schele (1982, 1988; Schele & M. Miller 1986) have made the assumption that the first 9 Ik 10 Mol at A1–B2 has the same mythological Long Count position as the second 9 Ik 10 Mol at C3–D3. This interpretation places all of the Calendar Round dates in mythological time, with the exception of 9 Ahau 3 Kankin. They have arbitrarily chosen a Long Count date of 9.13.13.15.0 (6 November, A.D. 705) for 9 Ahau 3 Kankin (a full Calendar Round or fifty-two years later than my Long Count position) and further assume that it is the illustrated event in the image. Chan Bahlum II died nearly four years before this, and thus they interpret this scene as Chan Bahlum II's apotheosis in the Underworld.

19. Shield Jaguar's death date is stated on Lintel 27 as 9.15.10.17.14 6 Ix 12 Yaxkin (19 June, A.D. 742).

20. Bird Jaguar's first lineage event occurs less than a year before his father's death. There is a nine-year gap between the death of Shield Jaguar I and the accession of his son Bird Jaguar. What occurred during this period of Yaxhilan's history is unknown.

21. The earlier Long Count position for this Calendar Round is 9.12.17.5.1 and the later Long Count position is 9.18.2.13.1. Bird Jaguar IV was born on 9.13.17.12.10 (27 August, A.D. 709) and died no later than 9.17.17.12.10 (A.D. 788).

22. Undeciphered glyphs that appear between the Supplementary Series and the haab month position occur at Naranjo as well. Their meaning is unknown.

23. This bracketing has a precedent in the text on the Temple of the Inscriptions Sarcophagus edge. The sentence stating Lady Zac Kuk's death is broken into two parts that bracket the sentence stating her Period Ending event (Lounsbury 1974:14–15). This implies that these two events are intimately related.

24. It is possible that the reading order of Stela 11 began with the Initial Series on the side of the monument. If this were the case the presentation of the second lineage event would occur first, and then the time frame would back up to presentation of the first lineage event. The basic nature of the story would not change. All roads lead to Rome.

Appendix

1. It has been suggested that Pacal II and Chan Bahlum II "made up" an official history; this suggestion is based on the fact that Palenque does not appear to have been more than a village during the Early Classic period. However, there is no evidence to show that this genealogy is not accurate. The text merely notes that these early rulers were lords and that they carried out Period Ending ceremonies. Whether Palenque was an important center or just a whistle stop does not affect the fact that these ancestors were lords who carried out important ceremonies for their community. It is equally possible that these early lords were not centered in Palenque itself but at some other nearby site.

2. Kathryn Josserand (pers. comm. 1986) notes that on the sacrophagus text, Pacal II's parentage statement has been fronted—that is, it has been moved to the beginning of the sentence. Mathews and Robertson (1985) note a second occurrence of the parentage statement for Pacal II on the Olvidado texts.

3. The rituals of the next major Period Ending (9.10.0.0.0) are recorded in the

Temple of the Inscriptions text as having been conducted by both Lady Zac Kuk and Pacal II.

4. The term *ah po* or *ahau* is applied to both rulers (subjects with recorded accession statements) and secondary actors. Hence it is not a title reserved for the king but rather a general title for lords.

5. Mathews and Schele (1974:66) speculated that the name of Batz Chan was another variation of Kan Xul II's name. Mathews (1983) has since argued for Kan Xul II and Batz Chan being separate individuals.

6. Temple XVIII is located adjacent to the Cross Group, which suggests that a viewer would probably know the information contained in the Cross Group narrative.

7. No death date is recorded in the surviving inscriptions for Chaacal III. However, assuming that Kuk II acceded to the throne shortly after his father's death, Chaacal III would have been about eighty-four years old at death and his reign about forty-two years in length. This long a reign would account for the large number of temples and monuments attributed to Chaacal III.

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pents, symbolize the cave openings and tunnels where these rituals took place.

According to the author, the texts indicate that members of the elite undertook a ritual circuit to several caves in the vicinity of their community much like that made by the modern highland Maya. The primary function of the sculptures is seen to be the public commemoration of private or semiprivate cave rituals performed by these Classic Maya.

Seventy-eight line drawings and photographs of Late Classic Maya wall panels and stelae illustrate the text.

From the Mouth of the Dark Cave, with its potential to force a full reconsideration of Maya art and, by implication, the entire field of Maya studies, will be of interest to archaeologists, anthropologists, art historians, iconographers and epigraphers, and all readers interested in Mesoamerican studies.

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Karen Bassie-Sweet studied Maya hieroglyphs under David Kelley at the University of Calgary and has taught Maya art and writing at the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, and Mount Royal College. This is her first book.

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